DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 367 016 CS 508 473

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TITLE A Critique of Scott's "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic": Philosophical Problems and Rhetorical Prospects.
PUB DATE 19 Nov 93
NOTE 81p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (79th, Miami Beach, FL, November 18-21, 1993).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Book/Product Reviews (072)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Discourse Analysis; *Epistemology; Ethics; *Rhetoric; *Rhetorical Theory
IDENTIFIERS *Rhetoric as Epistemic

ABSTRACT

Robert L. Scott's article "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic" exemplifies agonistic-transcendent rhetoric in that it sought to revalue "rhetoric." However, as Scott has already noted, his project was ultimately compromised by his not revaluing "epistemic" in conjunction. Scott's article is criticized with respect to the goals of agonistic-transcendent rhetoric, namely to revalue fundamental relationships. His discussions of epistemology, knowing as doing, truth, certainty, the human condition, and the ethics of rhetoric-as-epistemic are examined. The paper concludes that Scott left too much latitude to the reader by not revaluing key concepts, and thus much of his article could be ignored. Scott's role as agonistic-transcendent rhetor and the future of his project with respect to research are explored. Rhetoric-as-epistemic is then revalued with respect to tacit knowing, conviction, and commitment. (Eighty-eight notes are included. Contains 95 references.) (Author/RS)

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ED 367 016

A CRITIQUE OF SCOTT'S "ON VIEWING RHETORIC AS EPISTEMIC": PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS AND RHETORICAL PROSPECTS

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November 19, 1993

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Running head: Scott's views

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Abstract

Scott's "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" exemplifies agonistic-transcendent rhetoric in that it sought to revalue "rhetoric." However, as Scott has recently noted, his project was ultimately compromised by his not revaluing "epistemic" in conjunction. Scott's article is criticized with respect to the goals of agonistic-transcendent rhetoric, namely to revalue fundamental relationships. His discussions of epistemology, knowing as doing, truth, certainty, the human condition and the ethics of rhetoric-as-epistemic are examined. The author concludes that Scott left too much latitude to the reader by not revaluing key concepts, and thus much of his article could be ignored. Scott's role as agonistic-transcendent rhetor and the future of his project are explored. Rhetoric-as-epistemic is then revalued with respect to tacit knowing, conviction, and commitment.

A CRITIQUE OF SCOTT'S "ON VIEWING RHETORIC AS EPISTEMIC": PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS AND RHETORICAL PROSPECTS

> A wise man calmly considers what is right and what is wrong, and faces different opinions with truth, non-violence and peace. This man is guarded by truth and is a guardian of truth. He is righteous and he is wise. (The Dhammapada, 1973, 82)

An influential framework in contemporary rhetorical theory views rhetoric as being epistemic. As Jim Applegate (1990, n.p.) states in the Fall 1990 issue of the Rhetorical & Communication Theory Newsletter:

> [W]e have entered an intellectual era which is fertile ground for the reassertion of a modern and/or post-modern conception of communication that serves the traditional ideal of communication as central to the generation of ideas and the achievement of consensus on what counts as real. This environment enables us to reassert credibly that flawed communication creates flawed reality. . . .

In this perspective, rhetoric is said to form our (knowledge of) reality: reality is a social construction (cf. Berger & Luckmann, 1966/1967), and rhetoric is the generative process. As goes rhetoric, so goes reality.

Robert L. Scott's (1967) "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" has been acknowledged as "influential" (Foss, Foss, & Trapp, 1985, 250) in founding this perspective, "seminal" in its advocacy of the epistemic paradigm (Golden, Berquist & Coleman, 1983, 373) and the "initial impetus" of this philosophy of rhetoric (Cherwitz & Hikins, 1986, 17, note 7). Scott's epistemological stance is often summarized in reviews of contemporary rhetorical theory (e.g., Foss et al., 1985, 250-251). By 1978 Scott (1978, 29) himself can note the pervasiveness

of the paradigm: it is "an argument that need not be pressed, not for most contemporary students of communication: reality is socially constructed and the products of the process as well as the material of the process are symbols." "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" was heralded by the field, receiving professional recognition for advancing the epistemic movement in rhetorical theory.[1]

It therefore comes somewhat as a surprise to read that Scott (1988, 234-5, emphasis in original) feels his article was unsuccessful.

> In my own ways, in a number of fumbling attempts since 1967 . . . I have tried to overcome what seems to me to be the deleterious implications of rhetoric as the counterpart of dialectic, which is the cornerstone of the dominant conservative structure of Western rhetoric. But, as I now see the problem, I delivered myself back in to the hands of those I sought to resist by my very assertion that rhetoric is epistemic. As a proposition, the assertion cannot be successfully argued without inviting the forces of truth as a priori to occupy the citadel. . . . And why not? Knowledge must be something solid and prior to the communicating about it. Thus goes the way of epistemologizing.

Whitson and Poulakos (1993, 131-2) interpret Scott's statement as a —

> recantation of his rhetoric-as-epistemic position . . . [r]etracting his earlier view that rhetoric partakes in the production of knowledge and his later view that knowledge is the outcome of inter-subjective processes. . . . The above [cited] statement makes clear that Scott discovered . . . that he too had misunderstood rhetoric.

As these authors state (132), their goal is not to examine Scott's recantation, its impetus or implications but to offer Nietzsche's view of rhetoric as doxastic and aesthetic as a means "to keep the fetid forces of truth-as-a priori from occupying the citadel [,] . . . an alternative to the ill-fated project that sought to link rhetoric to epistemology."

The need for a fresh look. My purpose here is not to examine Whitson and Poulakos's

defense of the "citadel," explore Scott's "recantation" (which I do not think it was) or even assess an "ill-fated project." My motivation is to comprehend Scott's original article in order to see where he erred in the exposition of his position. This analysis is important for three reasons: (1) Rhetoric-as-epistemic was welcomed by rhetorical theorists "with greedy enthusiasm and . . . attempt[s] to gulp it down whole" (Leff, 1978, 77) and "Scott's supporters and critics alike accepted unquestionably rhetoric's link to epistemology and undertook to rearticulate it with renewed zeal" (Whitson & Poulakos, 1993, 133). This "enthusiasm" and "zeal" may rebound with equal intensity in an abandonment of Scott's position before it is better understood. After all, we should not compound the error of gulping it down whole by throwing it out altogether. (2) Scott's article has never been a focus of previous discussions.[2] What the field of rhetoric tends to do is place Scott's work within the context of philosophical relativism and examine this context rather than Scott's own statements (e.g., Brummett, 1990b; Orr, 1990). Whitson and Poulakos (1993, 133), to cite one last example, proceed similarly with their discussion of perspectivism and intersubjectivism. (3) An examination of "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" may yield clues regarding alternative paths the discussion of its claims may have taken. As such, a fresh look at the article may provide a fresh look at issues facing rhetorical theory.

I therefore return to the inaugural article itself and begin by asking: what was its focus? "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" argues for a positive, authentic role for rhetoric in contradistinction to views of rhetoric that either subordinate it or question its integrity. In so doing it advances rhetoric-as-epistemic as an alternative to viewing Truth as prior to the communicating of it. But Scott also discusses the nature of the human condition as well as an ethic derived from his approach to rhetoric. Its title notwithstanding, Scott's article can be viewed as discussing epistemology as a vehicle for advancing a particular ethical dimension for rhetoric. Indeed, ethics and values, I contend, rather than truth and knowledge are the core of Scott's approach to rhetoric.

Scott's bridging epistemology on the one hand and ethics and the human condition on the

other should not be surprising. As Parker Palmer (1983) notes, each epistemology has associated with it a particular ethic: How-we-know influences what-we-do. In addition, how-we-know has associated with it particular assumptions about what it is to be human, or "anthropology" broadly conceived.[3] Indeed, the awareness of these connections and the concomitant view of human becoming may typify the post-modern age.

But if values and ethics are more central to "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" than knowledge, the article itself aims not so much to advance our knowledge of rhetoric as modify our values concerning it. Summaries of Scott's article (e.g., Foss et al., 1985, 250-51; Golden et al., 1983, 373-74) treat the epistemic theme, but neglect what he says about its associated ethic. This neglect is unfortunate because, as Scott says, rhetoric-as-epistemic "is most coherent when it is taken as normative rather as descriptive. When so taken, it calls for a commitment to a standard . . ." (1967, 13, emphases in original; cf. Scott, 1964, 274).[4] To the extent the field of rhetoric has focused upon "epistemic" it has neglected the article's essential thrust and import. In so doing, the field has similarly overlooked assumptions Scott makes about the human condition. The discussion of epistemology "has led toward the tragic view of life: man who desires certainty understands that he cannot be certain and, moreover, that he must act in dissonant circumstances" (14). We can thus understand why Scott (1988) expresses frustration by the turn the discussion of his approach has taken and why he (1990, 302) now wishes to shun "epistemic" altogether. If the focus was not epistemology in the first place, then over attention to these issues would imply that (1) the discussion of Scott's article misunderstood its intent, but also that (2) "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" was an unsuccessful articulation of Scott's viewpoint.

My main goal here is not to rehabilitate Scott's article and approach but provide a critique and criticism of the rhetorical kind. The discussion will have four parts: (1) a summary of "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic," (2) an appraisal of its main elements, (3) philosophical extensions and critique, and (4) placing it in the context of Scott's other articles. In so doing we will be able to discern the article's strengths and weaknesses.

A means for a critique. What method is appropriate for a critique of Scott's article? I take as clues Scott's own statements of his role as rhetorical theorist. "The task of the rhetorical theorist is to specify the values that will mark an ethical rhetoric and continually to try to rescue these from the realm of easy cliché" (Scott, 1977b, 262).

> In short, what I am talking about are some very basic attitudes. These are attitudes that we share in some ways and in some ways both relish and suffer from. What I recommend are some very basic attitude changes, not that I think for a moment that these will be quick coming, even for myself, let alone my colleagues, the academic world at large, or the still larger real world. (Scott, 1989a, 5-6, emphasis in original)

Scott was here talking about attitudes toward theory building, but the passage is general enough to be applicable to his work in rhetoric. His work attempts to reveal commonly-held basic attitudes and, as was the case with, for example, rhetoric as founded on known Truth (1967) or the cult of facts (1968b), debunk them and recommend a reorientation of our values. We then need a framework that concerns values and revaluation.

Scott (1976) himself provides such a framework in his discussion of agonistic-transcendent rhetoric, namely "an open attempt to revalue fundamental relationships" (chart on 103). Agonistic-transcendent rhetoric, among other characteristics, involves "a commitment and recommendation of an individual who says in effect, 'I resolve to live by this value,' and, further, since he must live with others, he adds, 'and so should you.'" It involves choices to resolve inconsistencies in shared value systems, testing a particular resolution, a risking of the self in that resolved value system, and an orientation more focused on the process than on "some tangible goal" (106). If "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" sought to revalue rhetoric, then it should exemplify agonistic-transcendent rhetoric and be analyzed thereby.

This framework also accords with Scott's (1977b, 259) stated focus of "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" in his "ten years after" sequel:

> To my surprise the essay [sequel] I sketched turned out to re-affirm the

> basically ethical thrust of the earlier article. . . . My reformulation caused me to gain fresh insight into the three guiding values worked out in the earlier essay and, I hope, to re-establish them here via routes different than those I followed in 1967.

The central thrust of both articles, then, is ethicality and the fundamental task Scott faced in writing his article was to change our values. Scott is well aware that our theories will likely change as a result. But ultimately what is at stake in "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" as well as in Scott's subsequent work is not "rhetoric" but rhetoric, not theory but practice. His basic message is agonistic-transcendent: "I resolve to live by this value . . . and so should you."

Value premises are, of course, important in rhetorical criticism. "One of the strongest claims we can make for rhetorical criticism generally is its merit in clarifying values in specific pieces of discourse and relating these to societal tendencies" (Scott, 1984, 59). In the case of agonistic-transcendent rhetoric, values not only underlie and constitute the discourse but are its target. "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" not only reveals certain value premises at work but also seeks to alter the values held by the audience and hence modify various "societal tendencies."

As a critical framework, agonistic-transcendent suggests that we examine the way the rhetor openly attempts to revalue fundamental relationships. We can thus explore fundamental relationships Scott sought to revalue and how effective he was in doing so. Scott (10) said that his "undertaking can be described as philosophizing about rhetoric" so my critique will necessarily philosophize a bit as well. In conjunction with an analysis of Scott's article I offer several extensions from his approach. As Scott (1987, 59) noted, the critic has three roles: "to understand the arguments that make up knowledge . . . to judge the arguments . . . [and] to change roles, that is, to cease to function as a critic and to function in other ways" (59). My treatment of Scott's article will have these three same elements. The first task is to understand and judge his argument.

A critique of Scott's project

Agonistic-transcendent rhetoric strives "to revalue fundamental relationships." Scott's "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" seeks to the revalue the role of rhetoric in human knowing. Immutable Truth as a basis for rhetoric is impotent; instead, rhetoric should be guided by the notion that truth is contingent. Rhetoric is neither "a neutral presenting of data among equals" nor "a persuasive leading of inferiors by the capable" but rather a process of "cooperative critical inquiry." Knowing is inseparable from acting, and thus inseparable from speaking. At the same time, what is recommended is not so much a description of rhetorical practice but standards for its healthy functioning in the face of life's inevitable uncertainty, conflicts and tragedy. "Rhetoric-as-epistemic" is the label Scott chose to encapsulate these relationships.

From the foregoing summary of "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" we can begin to examine several key aspects of Scott's article: (1) the relation between epistemology and rhetoric, (2) the notion of knowing as acting, (3) how truth and certainty relate, (4) rhetoric-as-epistemic as a normative framework, (5) the derivative ethical standards proposed, and (6) the nature of the human condition. By examining these issues we will begin to discern problematic aspects of Scott's article that serve to work against its agonistic-transcendent purpose.

Epistemology and rhetoric

Scott utilizes Stephen Toulmin's (1958/1969) discussion of analytic arguments to argue against Immutable Truth as a foundation for rhetoric: we must abandon analytic argument as the ideal for rhetoric.[5] Scott's case proceeds as follows. Utilizing analytic argument as an ideal for rhetoric is to make untenable assumptions about the nature of truth and knowing. Knowledge is taken to be that which is certain. Certainty concerns "what has been true, is true, and shall be true, which is to say that it must be settled once and for all — immutable, changeless." Only analytic arguments have this quality, thus only analytic arguments are true.

However, analytic arguments are empty and have no content because the conclusions contain nothing not already present in the premises (12). Founding rhetoric on Immutable Truth would then mean that rhetoric is vacuous.[6]

If we abandon analytic argument as the ideal for rhetoric, where might we turn? Scott turns to Ehninger and Brockriede's discussion of debate as cooperative critical inquiry. Their framework "may," according to Scott, "be interpreted as taking a radical departure from the typical point of view. . . . [I]t is not simply an effort to make a preconceived position effective . . . [and thus] is one vantage point from which to see rhetoric as epistemic." Why? Because "[i]t would be absurd for anyone who begins with the attitude that he possesses truth, in the sense in which I began this essay, to embark on any genuine enterprise of cooperative critical inquiry" (13). To paraphrase: one would not search for truth if one already possessed it.

As Scott (10) noted, the field of rhetoric focused its attention upon what Toulmin had to say about the structures of arguments without noting the implications of what the philosopher had to say about epistemology. But Scott does not follow Toulmin entirely. Two contrasts are evident: (1) epistemology as the assessment of claims to know; (2) the contingency of claims being field-dependent (not time-dependent.)

The nature of epistemology. Epistemology for Toulmin (1958/1969, e.g., 6-8, 10, 255) does not concern how-I-came-to-know but rather addresses the support we can give to our claims to know, the arguments we make in defense of our claims. It is in the interests of assessing claims that he abandons the analytic ideal and advances (a) his well-known data-warrant-claim model and (b) the notion of the "argument field."[7] We could say, therefore, that rhetoric of a certain kind, namely that which assesses our knowledge claims, is epistemic. In this case, rhetoric would not be viewed as the Truth effective but would concern making claims effective. As such, this framework separates claiming from assessing claims.

The distinction between claims and their support is not without merit. In the philosophy of science, Hans Reichenbach made a similar distinction between the "context of discovery" and the "context of justification" (Oldroyd, 1986, 253-54), and Karl Popper (1965/1968,

135, 295) noted that not all descriptions (i.e., claims) involve arguments (i.e., warrants). The distinction also accords with Ehninger and Brockriede's notion of debate as "settling inferential questions critically" (qtd. in Scott, 1967, 13): it can be said that the process of supporting and assessing claims constitutes cooperative critical inquiry. It might then be legitimate to conjoin "inquiry," "rhetoric," "argument" and "knowledge" in such a way that they are near synonyms for the process by which we create knowledge. Truth would not be prior to this process, for what is true would depend upon the process of critical, rhetorical, inquiry: truth is contingent, just as Scott said. Rhetoric, at least with respect to this process of critical inquiry, would be epistemic.

However, this bifurcation of claiming and assessing claims, the former not being epistemic while the latter is, does not accord with Scott's framework. Both activities are species of "doing" and thus both are epistemic given Scott's doing-is-knowing position. There can be no separation of claiming and assessing claims if Scott wants to find a legitimate place for rhetoric as a whole or does not want to limit rhetoric to communication that assesses claims to know. To extrapolate from his discussion, rhetoric is not limited to (the justification of) arguments.

The temporal emphasis. As Toulmin (1958/1969, 235-6) notes, when the analytic ideal is abandoned, timeless (i.e., field-invariant) standards of assessment are as well (1958/1969, 235-6). Arguments must be assessed in relation to the "fields" of discourse in which they inhabit, for example, science, ethics, art criticism or theology (1958/1969, 10; cf. 248, 255), and standards of argument validity are "field-dependent" (1958/1969, 147; see also 15, 218). In consequence, epistemology must be empirical, examining arguments as they occur in practice, and historical, how revolutions have occurred in our methods of argument (1958/1969, 257): "its primary business is a retrospective, justificatory one" (1958/1969, 6).

This retrospective, justificatory process is not limited to claims, however, and Toulmin (1958/1969, 252) draws no distinctions here between traditional topics in epistemology and

human action more generally:

> Was I justified in shaking my fist at him? Or in waving him past [allowing his car to pass mine on the road]? Or in betting on at least one tail coming up? Or in declaring that I knew the answer to his question? These four questions are more alike than we had realised hitherto; and epistemologists need see no more gulfs — and no more problems — in the latter two cases than are present in the former.

Epistemology, as assessing the justifications that warrant actions, thus has a broad scope.

Scott's scope is also broad, but in a different way. He (12) seizes upon Toulmin's abandoning timeless standards to say that arguments are not "tenseless" but are "in time." Scott uses "time" as his open door to existentialism and knowing-as-doing.[8] His focus is upon individual events in which dissoi logoi are encountered, not upon similarities among past events that would allow them to be grouped in some fashion. This focus upon the individual, historic event is, incidentally, the "root metaphor" in contextualism.[9]

> By historic event, however, the contextualist does not mean primarily a past event, one that is, so to speak, dead and has to be exhumed. He means the event alive in its present. . . . The real historic event, the event in its actuality, is when it is going on now, the dynamic dramatic active event. We may call it an "act," . . . an act in and with its setting, an act in its context. (Pepper, 1942/1970, 232, emphasis in original)

Knowing, then, would be an active process rather than an outcome or attainment (e.g., in the sense of one's having an understanding of a matter). Scott means "epistemic" to refer to this process.

Scott refers to Gorgias as a way of discussing the relation of rhetoric and knowledge. As Scott (15) renders it, Gorgias proposed that "if anything is and can be known, it cannot be communicated." Scott's view implicitly concurs with this proposition since it suggests that the appropriate intent for communication is not to assert "X is Y" but rather to speak about X and see what happens. Indeed, if truth is created "moment by moment" one cannot aim to

communicate truth. Suppose I have a truth I wish to communicate. By the time I speak, it is a different moment; the truth created previously is different (potentially) than the truth created as I communicate. You cannot step into the river (of truth) twice because it's not the same river (pace Heraclitus). To strive to communicate a truth, to have this as one's goal, is therefore folly because one cannot communicate (the same) truth. Scott's view thus stresses a serendipitous quality of communication. If what-I-know (knowing) depends upon what-I-do (doing), the epistemic outcome can always be somewhat of a surprise. This is why a fixed, known-in-advance knowledge cannot be communicated: what one knows is modified as one communicates.

An appraisal of rhetoric and epistemology. Though their scopes might be equally expansive, the implications of rhetoric-as-epistemic differ between Scott's and Toulmin's frameworks. Scott uses Toulmin's The uses of argument for the purposes of abandoning the analytic ideal, and thus abandoning Immutable Truth in favor of truth-as-contingent. At the same time, Scott wants to avoid viewing rhetoric as limited to assessing claims and thus epistemic in Toulmin's sense. Scott's emphasis is upon rhetorical acts as occasions for knowing. His frustration with the nature of the rhetoric-as-epistemic literature may stem from the point that Toulmin's framework divorces claims from their assessment — claims being prior, of course — and thus slides back toward truth as being prior to speaking.

In selecting "epistemic" to phrase his approach to rhetoric, Scott underestimated how entrenched the notion was that "knowledge" meant something (to be) secured, that "epistemology" implies a focus upon something historical, and thus that knowing is prior to speaking. Whitson and Poulakos (1993, 141-2), for example, implicitly state the common understanding:

> Epistemic rhetoric draws strength and derives consolation from the knowledge that it has done justice to established methods of inquiry by following closely epistemological procedures whose authority is unquestionable. . . . In the epistemic tradition, orators must know something to begin with — in fact, it is

their knowledge that should authorize them to address an audience.

This "epistemic tradition," of course, is precisely what Scott's rhetoric-as-epistemic opposed and he (e.g., 1968a, 1975) derides it frequently. The above passage represents what Weimer (1979) might term the conventional or "received view" of the relation of rhetoric to epistemology, not the relation's revaluation within a nonjustificational framework.

The point here is not to quibble over frameworks and definitions, such as what is properly meant by "epistemic,"[10] but to remind ourselves that words focus our attention and "epistemic" points more readers toward knowledge-as-prior than knowing-as-doing. As Scott (1990, 302, 303 note 3) observes, rhetoric-as-epistemic involves two burdens: shift our senses of both "rhetoric" and "epistemology" if we are to revalue their fundamental relationship. Scott (1990, 303, note 2) confides that he has "stubbornly clung to the term ['epistemic'] trying to rehabilitate it but succeeding more often in dragging the old meanings to the detriment of the new": "my persistence in using the term . . . may be an exercise in futility and misdirection" (1990, 302). Scott's "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" revalued "rhetoric" in reference to "epistemic" as if the latter term had a stable meaning and everyone could see in which direction Scott pointed. Unfortunately, what stability there was led in an unintended direction and Scott's original article needed to give the readers motive to revalue "to know." Scott (12) expresses awareness that it is "difficult to use the word ['truth'] without the freight of the analytic ideal" But since he never expresses concern in "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" for "epistemic," the reader is not forewarned of conceptual difficulties.[11] Scott's error in using "epistemic" was compounded by his treatment of "doing."

Doing as knowing

In Scott's view, it is by acting (or the word I will use more frequently here, "doing") that we know. Without doing, there is no knowing. Scott makes this claim explicitly in his citing the words of Pierre Thévenaz: "Man acts and speaks before he knows. Or, better, it is in acting and in action that he is enabled to know" (15, emphases in original). The connection

between knowing and doing is thus clear: doing is co-extensive with knowing. Further, as communicating is an act, knowing accompanies communicating, thus "rhetoric . . . is a way of knowing" (17). Without these connections we would be led to ask "Is rhetoric the kind of action that yields knowledge?" or "Which rhetorical acts yield knowledge?" Scott need not address these matters since his claim was universal for rhetoric as a whole. The integration of "doing" and "knowing" establishes rhetoric as a legitimate, epistemic enterprise. Scott's sense of "doing" is therefore important in our assessment of his position.

The nature of "doing". As "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" does not define "doing" or a similar construct explicitly, we must glean from Scott's examples. He provides two examples in his discussion of "conflicting claims" and a third in his discussion of ethics.

(a) His first example is of Goethe's literary figure Faust translating the Greek word logos. Faust is considering various alternatives, four options to be exact (14). The situation facing Faust is one of choosing among alternatives.

(b) Scott's second example is the hypothetical case of a man facing a moral dilemma. Should he, in a time of war, act as a citizen and go to war to defend his country, or should he stay at home to meet the needs of his family? The choice concerns which duty to make paramount. According to Scott (15), this "example can be easily modified into other quite common sets of circumstances: a draft board considering a particular case, arguments concerning the policy of the draft, or even war as a particular or general policy."

(c) The final example concerns a moral dilemma facing children watching a puppet show. At one point, as the narrative goes, a devil-puppet asks them where a certain child-puppet is. The children know that if they provide this information, the child-puppet will be harmed, and so they lie. The priest attending the show with the children is concerned that the children did not tell the truth, that is, behaved just the opposite of how they were told to behave. Scott cites this story as an example of a moral choice: the children had to choose to tell the truth or choose to save the good puppet (17).

From these examples, then, "doing" amounts to selecting.[12] I am presented with

various alternatives from which I choose one to implement. I am presented with conflicting claims of duty; I select one to follow and enact. I am presented with different moral obligations; I select one to value more in a given circumstance and act thereon. Two issues emerge: how do the alternatives arise and how do we select among them?

The matter of how the alternatives arise is crucial for a philosophy of rhetoric based ultimately on "choice." The precepts I adhere to are those operative during my assessment of the alternative courses of action, and the circumstances are those that I perceive as being relevant. How the precepts become operative and how I focus on certain facets of the situation and ignore others underlie my assessment if not determine its outcome.[13] Scott's three examples serve to illustrate the matter. As described in "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic," Faust considers but four words out of the entire German vocabulary for translating logos: why these particular words and not "principle" or perhaps a two-word phrase? In Scott's second example, the man considers joining the army or staying at home: did he also consider the alternative of leaving the country? In the case of the puppet show, did the children consider storming the stage and subduing the devil-puppet? The considered alternatives may have been perceived as being the most relevant, but what-is-relevant is by no means clear or given in a situation, even those amenable to analysis and calculation.[14] Scott can be read as saying that the alternatives arise from "the demands of the precepts one adheres to and the demands of the circumstances in which one must act" (17). This answer amounts to saying that certain possibilities just came to mind, an answer that by no means trivializes the vexing problem of how the human mind functions.[15] Concerning the locus of the alternatives, we should recall that the dissoi logoi as discussed by the Sophists were contrasting potentialities of reality; in acting, we choose one logos to actualize rather than another (Untersteiner, 1954). For Scott, the conflicting claims are aspects of social reality.[16]

Aside from his examples, Scott suggests that (ethical) choice involves performing a cost-benefit analysis: "make maximum the good and minimum the harm in the situation" (17). But how are such determinations to be made? What is the nature of perceiving the potential good and

harm? If good and harm are relative to a particular value, then I need to have selected a value as a frame of reference prior to my discerning good and harm (Shirk, 1965, 36). There will be good and harm with respect to value X and different goods and harms with respect to value Y. First I see it one way, then I see it in another way; the situation is comparable to the "figure-ground," for example, faces-vase, perceptual problem noted by Gestalt psychologists.[17] Where do I stand in order to compare these different sets of potentials? Presumably each value will view itself as being of high merit, so I must stand outside of both X and Y. "How do I chose where to stand?" becomes our next concern and we here arrive in the middle of a vicious circle from which only the "theory of logical types" might save us (see, e.g., Bateson & Bateson, 1987/1988).[18]

Lastly, how do Scott's examples of choice relate to his use of debate as cooperative critical inquiry? None of the examples he provides involve this process. The dilemmas and choices are faced by individuals, not groups. There is no evident context of intersubjective reflection and deliberation. We can elaborate upon the examples and place them within such a context, but the point is that Scott's article itself did not do so. The examples, it must be acknowledged, pertain to exigencies of social situations that may occasion rhetoric. But they do not seem to point to knowing-as-doing, to Scott's framework of rhetoric-as-epistemic.

What is known in doing. If knowing and doing are integral, then clues to Scott's sense of "knowing" are important. Unfortunately, Scott's use of "to know" and its cognates is infrequent.[19] Instead, he most typically uses "truth." As such, Scott's article fails to provide sufficient context for what he means by "knowing" and thus "epistemic." Moreover, by using "truth" rather than "knowing" Scott's implied focus is upon the object of the rhetorical process (truth) rather than upon the process itself.

The other clues we have available derive from Scott's examples. They should serve to indicate how these situations give rise to knowledge, that is, what "knowing" means. With respect to his three illustrations: (a) What does Faust know in the process of translating logos? Presumably he knows that "logos is best translated in this context as . . ." for that is the kind of

conclusion he is seeking. (b) What does the father of the family know in deciding whether to join the army or stay with his family? He knows where his duty lies in this situation, that is, what course of action he should take. (c) What do the children at the puppet show know? They know they must save the child-puppet from the devil-puppet by telling a lie. In general, what one knows is how to act in the situation with which one is faced. This is not to say that in the process of reaching a decision we learn only what we have concluded. To take the first example, Faust may well have learned something about the relative advantages and disadvantages of various translations for logos for the Biblical passage in question. He may also learn something about the process of translation itself, the Biblical usage of this word, the context of Greek thought in that day and age, and perhaps even about God. The experience of this effort may have various affects upon Faust including those that are epistemic in nature. Ultimately, of course, Faust must choose one German word for logos, but what Faust knows in his "doing" is more than "logos is best translated in this context as . . ."[20] The father may learn more about moral dilemmas, and so on. Knowing, in other words, affects the knower. "If an act of knowing affects our choice between alternative frameworks, or modifies the framework in which we dwell, it involves a change in our way of being" (Polanyi, 1969, 134). None of these implications are explicit in Scott's article, of course. His examples do not point to a context of knowing nor does he indicate what-is-known within them.

An appraisal of knowing and doing. As the foregoing discussion indicates, Scott's discussion of doing and knowing is problematic. (a) Doing as selecting among alternatives begs the question of which alternatives arise and how. (b) The nature of selecting may lead to an infinite regress. (c) It is unclear what knowing accompanies one's acting. (d) Scott's infrequent use of "to know" compared to "truth" works counter to his theme of rhetoric's epistemic process. (e) The three examples he provides do not mirror the epistemic process Scott says is and ought to be rhetoric's.

In explicating Scott's position we would need to explore how selection, choice and evaluation is related to "truth." Is what-is-true that which I select or choose as being true?

If so, what-is-true cannot go beyond what-comes-to-mind. The nature of human cognitive functioning may thus underlie cooperative critical inquiry and our mutual quest for knowledge. As he notes (1987, 59), "What I call the present, then, is usually the well remembered past and the confidently expected future. . . . If I conclude that whatever exists, exists in time, then I have said in effect that existence is created of memory and expectation." In his many articles, Scott consistently grounds his position in social processes but here acknowledges the essential role of psychological processes.[21]

Both the nature of "doing" and how alternatives arise need to be discussed with respect to our understanding of "freedom." If we are not free, then perhaps we really have little choice among the alternatives, or in how they arise for our selection. Scott's existentialist position relies upon human freedom as a necessary foundation for rhetoric-as-epistemic and "the tragic view of life" as well as the three cardinal virtues of tolerance, will and responsibility. These connections need further exploration if Scott's approach is to be espoused. As he (1977b, 261) admits, "The fact of having a culture with its traditions does not seem problematic at all; what may be problematic is the very notion of freedom to decide questions." Scott resolves the problem by saying, in essence, that humans must be free because social change occurs. But this resolution is wanting: change does not imply freedom, as the notion of a dynamic yet deterministic, mechanistic universe indicates.

Rhetoric-as-epistemic in Scott's sense is grounded in his existentialist position. To accept his framework may involve acceptance of this philosophy for rhetoric. Scott assumes his existential frame of reference as a given, in essence providing an application of his earlier article "Some implications of existentialism for rhetoric" (1964). But if the reader can divorce "epistemic" from existentialism, then most of Scott's meaning (and article) can be ignored — and for the most part, this possibility is what indeed occurred. "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" is cited in reference to no fewer than three different philosophical frameworks discussed in Cherwitz' (1990) volume: relativism, critical rationalism and existentialism. Scott's framework also has a pragmatic side in that rhetoric-as-epistemic is

recommended as a better means than the analytic ideal (cf. Toulmin, 1958/1962, 232).[22] The point here is not to argue that Scott's article is more reflective of one philosophical approach than another, but that it has a chameleon-like quality. Readers read into it what they wanted, but in so doing misread Scott's "epistemic." It is no wonder the discussion proceeded onto knowledge and epistemology rather than knowing and the nature of the rhetorical act.

Truth and certainty "in time"

Scott's epistemic theme and linking knowing to doing emphasize process. Conceptually, "knowledge" is often said to be that which is true and/or certain. In advancing rhetoric-as-epistemic, Scott must revalue "truth" and "certainty."

Truth. As "knowing" is given slight treatment in "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic," examining the more frequently used concept "truth" is important. Scott makes a temporal shift in reconceptualizing "truth." Truth exists, but it is contingent, created via our actions. "Man must consider truth not as something fixed and final," he says, "but as something to be created moment by moment" (17). Thus Scott escapes the negative consequences for rhetoric based on Immutable Truth.[23] But once created, what kind of existence does truth have? More importantly, does truth exist apart from the act creating it? If so, then truth, once created, can be prior to subsequent, future action. We can create truth, and then keep coming back to it, relying upon it as a guide for conduct. Rhetoric-as-epistemic allows for this possibility (i.e., creating truth and then using it) inasmuch as it does not preclude dogmatism, though it does indeed question its value. Reliance-upon-previously-created-truth, however, is similar to a notion of truth Scott rejects in his article, namely truth-as-socially-given.

To reject all views positing knowledge as prior to speaking, we must say that truth is not given at any time, that it never exists apart from the act. Truth is not only created, it is created "moment by moment," continuously. The moment a truth is not created, or more appropriately phrased "cannot be created," it ceases to be.[24] The temporal shift from eternity to contingency means not only that knowing comes from doing, but also that "knowing X" comes from "doing

X."[25] To emphasize the process involved rather than the product, we might want to use "truthing" rather than "truth" though this might strain our semantics just a bit.

Certainty. While there is a temporal shift regarding "truth" Scott advances no similar shift for "certainty." In arguing against "certainty" he assumes throughout his discussion that "certainty" entails immutability, is atemporal and thus is to be shunned as a value and goal. But if "truth" and "knowledge" are contingent within an epistemic rhetoric, why not "certainty" as well? Scott argues against certainty even of the situational kind, for we act in the midst of omnipresent uncertainty, within the reality of unresolvable "conflicting claims." There are contingent truths we can know, yet certainty is never ours, such is the "tragic view of life."

In consequence, truth (of a moment) is uncertain (even in that moment), and our knowledge (known via our moment-by-moment actions) is uncertain (even in those actions). I can act and thus create the truth and know it, yet I am not certain of that truth-as-known-in-action. Gorgias was known for his skepticism; it is unclear whether Scott is far behind. If nothing is certain, not even in the moment, then to be consistent with his position Scott himself is uncertain that truth is created in the moment, that actions are epistemic, and that we act in the midst of an inevitable uncertainty. If "uncertainty" pervades the human condition and all thought and action, then it may serve to undermine Scott's position itself.[26] Such a consequence does not bother Scott. Indeed, he elevates uncertainty to a high "principle," for from this principle we get the "cardinal virtues" of tolerance, will and responsibility. In Scott's view, certainty does not exist, only uncertainty (it seems so universal it might as well be considered the substance of reality[27]). The prospects for what we may call a momentary certainty are discussed at a later juncture in reference to "commitment" and "conviction" within the act.

An appraisal of truth and certainty. To revalue rhetoric, Scott emphasizes the contingency of knowledge. But contingency is discussed in the context of "truth" rather than other key concepts. As such, Scott failed to emphasize implications that would have made clear how he was revaluing the epistemic process he charted for rhetoric. Frequent use of "truth"

objectifies what for Scott is a contingent, uncertain process. Scott's temporal shift is critical in his claim that knowing and speaking are conjoint rather than separate. He needed to emphasize momentariness more and ensure that the reader understood the shift away from a prior-subsequent frame for knowing and speaking.

Rhetoric-as-epistemic as normative ethic

In discussions of rhetoric-as-epistemic, Scott's statement that "[t]his notion is most coherent when it is taken as normative rather than as descriptive" has been forgotten. This point is not minimal in his article and he discusses it at some length in reference to Ehninger and Brockriede's "ideal" for debate, even more so than "cooperative critical inquiry" itself. Their position is not descriptive, according to Scott, because it is at variance with debate as practiced in many situations. The same argument would seem to apply to rhetoric-as-epistemic. Scott's position does not describe rhetoric as practiced but rather presents an ideal for our attention and approval. When we say that a position is normative, we mean that it outlines a practice that ought to be followed; when we say that a position offers an ideal, we mean that it provides a goal to which we can aspire. Scott's rhetoric-as-epistemic takes the form of a recommendation for rhetoric rather than a definition of "rhetoric." As a recommendation, we can choose to follow it or ignore it. Scott ends his article by reminding us that we have a choice to make: to act upon the basis that truth is certain or that it is uncertain. As a normative and ideal framework for rhetoric, Scott prefers the latter course.

On the other hand, Scott argues "beyond the norm," that is, he does make distinct, descriptive claims. The whole position is based on a knowledge of the human condition, of its true nature. "In human affairs, ours is a world of conflicting claims" (15). He also claims that to believe "Truth is certain" is a deception. His statement is worth quoting a second time: "My argument is not that one has the choice to act on prior truth or to act to create truth. One may act assuming that the truth is fixed . . . but he will be deceiving himself" (15). There is no choice here, unless it be "to know" versus "to be deceived." Truth-as-certain does not

exist; therefore, to act as if it did is self deceiving. Scott's basic, agonistic-transcendent message is here evident: "I resolve to live by this value . . . and so should you."

In reference to rhetoric-as-epistemic, Scott's article slides between "is" and "ought," between description and norm. If arguments concerning the former are of a different "argument field" than those concerning the latter, then we have to say that Scott is advancing two claims. First, rhetoric is epistemic. Second, rhetoric should be epistemic. "Rhetoric-as-epistemic" may be ambiguous in that two, not one, claims are being made. Scott's statement that his approach is best seen as normative seeks to guide the discussion about "rhetoric" away from its definition (the first claim) toward its ideal (the second claim). Scott's discussion may have planted the seed of its own ineffectiveness by giving the readers two claims they could treat separately.

Scott's distinguishing between descriptive and normative facets of a theory of rhetoric is evident in rhetorical theories that stress choice and value judgments. "Both [Karl] Wallace and [Richard] Weaver emphasize the basis of rhetoric as 'choice,' pointing out that the rhetor's 'choices' lie in the domain of ethics" (Golden et al., 1983, 271). Weaver (1983, 284-5) observes that "as long as man is a creature responding to purpose, his linguistic expression will be a carrier of tendency. . . . We have no sooner uttered words than we have given impulse to other people to look at the world, or some part of it, in our way. . . . Finally, we must never lose sight of the order of values as the ultimate sanction of rhetoric." Wallace (1963, 243-4) says that the fields of ethics and rhetoric both examine situations in which individuals must choose among alternatives, ethics with an aim to examine how values used for making judgments are justified and rhetoric with an aim to how values are revealed in concrete situations. Fisher (1978), for example, can be viewed as an extension of rhetoric's description of "good reasons."

But here we find a different goal for rhetoric than Scott's rhetoric-as-epistemic. His aim is not an observational study of values in practice (descriptive) but recommending modes of conduct for rhetors (normative). As agonistic-transcendent rhetor, Scott's goal is not to

observe, categorize or analyze rhetorical practice but influence it by revaluing our sensibilities regarding "rhetoric."

An appraisal. Scott's agonistic-transcendent assertion that rhetorical practice should proceed as if truth were contingent is surrounded by statements descriptive of, for example, rhetoric and truth. The field of rhetoric attended to the definitional "is" — and with a particular interpretation for that matter — rather than the prescriptive "ought." This consequence indicates that the ethical claim was not as effective as Scott had hoped.

A recent discussion over the death of rhetoric-as-epistemic serves to indicate that the "is" has eclipsed the "ought." Brummett's (1990a) "eulogy" presumes that the thrust of epistemic rhetoric, like other theory, is to "understand behavior, analyze discourse, or explain the choices made in history" (70), goals that rhetoric-as-epistemic in its descriptive sense has failed to attain. Cherwitz and Hikins's (1990) rejoinder is that philosophizing about rhetoric is an important project for the study of communication, and again the descriptive slant is evident. Farrell (1990, 84) points out that the normative emphasis is absent in Brummett's and Cherwitz and Hikin's discussions: "There is no reason why the dispute about rhetorical epistemology needed to turn into a dispute between theory and practice [i.e., rhetorical criticism]. This is because the real mission of rhetoric as a tradition and theory has always been to invent and to enrich rhetorical practice [i.e., our being rhetors]." In his preceding lines Farrell (83-4) asks the other authors, and by implication the field as a whole, to "know thyselves . . . [in] our own nature as rhetorical creatures: an undiminished capacity to engage limitation through imagination, to find moral content in the experience of other as audience, and wisdom through the collective production and enactment of logos." These themes echo those of "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic."

Ironically, it may be ambiguity and uncertainty about "rhetoric" that leads us to think of rhetoric-as-epistemic as a definition or characterization rather than an ideal, a standard or set of precepts for informing our practice of rhetoric. In arguing against the prevalent view of rhetoric as "making the truth effective," Scott's says not that we err badly in following it (i.e.,

a normative claim) but that we would be deceiving ourselves (i.e., a descriptive claim). The reader might likely ask "well, then, what is rhetoric?" — a question Scott (9) says has echoed through history ever since Polus' similar query of Socrates in Plato's Gorgias — and find the answer in rhetoric-as-epistemic. Couching the entire argument in terms of normative claims for rhetoric would, of course, have entailed less focus on the descriptive claim. In this event, Scott would have had to use Toulmin differently, not focus on the vacuousness of analytic argument, not define truth as being contingent, and so on. His normative arguments come later in his article, in the context of an ethic for rhetoric-as-epistemic. What are the connections?

Tolerance, will and responsibility.

To accompany rhetoric-as-epistemic, Scott advances the virtues of tolerance, will and responsibility as being normative guidelines for rather than descriptors of rhetoric. Let us start with "tolerance" and chart the connection to rhetoric-as-epistemic.

Tolerance. Rhetoric is epistemic: we communicate and in that process contingent truth is created. Truth-as-contingent "demands toleration" because "[i]t would be inconsistent with one's starting point and one's quest to act otherwise. When one's undertaking involves the belief and action of others . . . [then respecting] the integrity of the expression and action of others" is required (16).[28] We must Scott's claim.

First, if we take Scott's article at its face value, rhetoric-as-epistemic as an ideal is one of many ideals I could take into account when deciding how to act. Could I follow the guidelines of rhetoric-as-epistemic and yet choose an intolerant alternative? Quite consistently with Scott's use of the dissoi logoi, "tolerance" is one of the many conflicting claims operative in a situation. I can quite conceivably assent to rhetoric-as-epistemic as a process of inquiry and as the outcome of that process in a given situation act intolerantly. Such an act would not meet Scott's normative guideline for rhetoric, but perhaps there were other claims I chose to make operative. Is this not what the debate concerning censorship of, for example, pornography is about, namely the kind of world I would be creating by censoring

pornography versus the kind of world I would be creating by tolerating pornography?

My acting intolerantly will be viewed as less than normative, but — second — Scott says it would also "spoil [my] own potentiality for knowing" (16, emphasis in original). This claim lacks foundation in Scott's article. If acting creates knowledge, then intolerant acts create knowledge, too. My acting intolerantly may create truths that my acting tolerantly would not. And it may well be that I prefer the truths stemming from intolerant acts to those from tolerant acts. It could be argued that intolerant acts create nothing but merely serve to enact one's commitment; therefore, only tolerant acts are epistemic and on this basis tolerance is always warranted. But this objection has validity only to the extent that knowledge is the Supreme Good. "Thou shalt pursue knowledge above all else" is one of many conflicting claims I may face. Within Scott's framework it would not be an absolute or universal value in the human condition.

Third, nothing in rhetoric-as-epistemic says that I must communicate with everybody, nor does it decide for me with whom I should discourse. If we take Ehninger and Brockriede's "ideal" for debate as an ideal for an epistemic rhetoric, then cooperative critical inquiry should be pursued. But with whom should I cooperate? Might I make more progress in my "quest" if I cooperate with tolerant interlocutors as opposed to intolerant ones? If so, and given the importance of my quest, do I not have grounds for turning away from those who are intolerant? Your "expression and action" may hinder the process of cooperative critical inquiry in which I was engaged. Finding suitable compatriots in our quest may be problematic, but it has been viewed as important:

> Our minds and feelings are trained by the company we keep, and perverted by the company we keep. Thus good or bad company trains respectively. It is therefore very important to be able to make the right choice so that we train rather than pervert. And we cannot make this choice unless it is already trained, and not perverted. This is a vicious circle from which anyone is lucky to escape. (Pascal, 1966, 272, B6/K814)

> If on the journey of life a man can find a wise and intelligent friend who is good and self-controlled, let him go with that traveler; and in joy and recollection let them overcome the dangers of the journey. (The Dhammapada, 1973, 82)

Tolerance of others could limit my potential to know as well as become. Others will affect me, and if my goal is to progress or develop in a particular direction I will need to weigh the positive and negative consequences of interacting with you.

Scott's framework, in other words, does not preclude my excluding you from a discussion. I might, after all due reflection, decide to cease further interactions with you. If you and I agree to cooperate, then, to keep our agreement, it may be necessary for us to be tolerant of each other. But this is a different claim than what Scott makes. His claim concerns an ethical consequence from the notion of rhetoric-as-epistemic. But, at most, tolerance as a required ethic is relative to a prior agreement among participants engaged in inquiry, pertains to an agreed-upon process: tolerance is required if it is part of our social contract.[29]

Fourth, what does Scott mean by "quest" (cf. "It would be inconsistent with one's starting point and one's quest to act otherwise [than tolerantly]")? What are we in search of? He says that "truth [is] a toehold to climb into the yet-to-be-created" (16). But, paradoxically, we cannot search for the yet-to-be-created because it can't be found. The yet-to-be-created is always in our future; it is never here, never now, never present (cf. Scott, 1987, 59). Moreover, the serendipity of the rhetorical process can't be sought: it just happens. We might be able to identify those conditions under which serendipity is maximized, but Scott's article does not discuss notions of generative activity or the nature of the creative act.

From this discussion it would seem that rhetoric-as-epistemic does not in and of itself demand tolerance "of the integrity of the expression and action of others" (16) and is not inconsistent with tolerance-for-enquiring-minds.[30] The only persons Scott seems willing to exclude in principle are those who propagate intolerance (16); in other words, the intolerant are tolerated if they are benign but not if they are malignant.

Will. Concerning "will," Scott says: "If one cannot be certain . . . one must either withdraw from the conflicts of life or find some way to act in the face of these conflicts" (16). Basically Scott is saying that truth-as-certain provided its own motive for action; truth-as-contingent does not, so something other than Truth must be my motive for action. Indeed, "will" as a virtue implies that I must act. Note first that Scott's claim pertains to the human condition and not just to rhetoric-as-epistemic. The more limited claim that I must be active in inquiry in order to learn anything is more to the point of rhetoric-as-epistemic. Second, Scott's option concerning withdrawing from the conflicts of life is an impossibility given Scott's own views about the human condition and the omnipresent "conflicting claims."

It is interesting that Scott devotes so little attention to "will" in his article, not treating it with the same format given to "tolerance" and "responsibility."[31] Perhaps he was uncertain just what the consequences for "will" were. For example, how can we not act in a given moment? No matter what we do, we do something. The dissoi logoi are not things we can escape, and from them we cannot hide. Thus, why did Scott not acknowledge that of the two choices he outlines, namely withdrawing from the conflicts of life or acting in the face of those conflicts, only the latter is meaningful for the former is only hypothetical and cannot be accomplished no matter how hard we may try? In terms of "will," there is no way we cannot will. Unless, perhaps, Scott wants to say that not all acts are willed, somehow divorcing acting and willing.[32] Perhaps willing is the "human" or "courageous" posture in the face of life's conflicts, whereas (mere) acting without will is somehow less than our human potential.[33] Again, Scott's discussion is far too brief on this important point, and we can only speculate what resolution he would prefer.[34]

Responsibility. Last, for "responsibility," "one who acts without certainty must embrace the responsibility for making his actions the best possible. He must recognize the conflicts of the circumstances that he is in, maximizing the potential good and accepting responsibility for the inevitable harm" (16-17). But why is this the case?

First, harm is inevitable. Not to choose to accept one of the conflicting claims means that

harms from not choosing it will occur. One must be responsible for the path not taken: "the rightness of the decision does not obviate the responsibilities generated by the rejected claim" (15). These inevitable consequences are what leads Scott (14) to say that rhetoric-as-epistemic leads to the tragic sense of life.

Second, making decisions about the future involves a perception of the past, in particular of the harms we have created. Borrowing from Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Scott says, "To redeem the past, man must learn 'to recreate all "it was" into "thus I willed it"'" (17). The ethical rhetor acting in the present is not only to maximize the potential good while minimizing the potential harm (i.e., what might happen) but is also to act to redeem the past (i.e., what did happen).[35] Redemption is needed, presumably, because harms cry out for it, that is, previous acts create a present exigency.

Rather than elaborating upon the nature of redemption, Scott relates the story of the children at the puppet show. Yet no where in his discussion does he mention the children's responsibility for the inevitable harm their lie caused in consequence, or even what that harm may have been. When the priest chastised the children for lying, they responded "We wanted to help the child." They focused only on the potential good, a perspective John Dewey as quoted by Scott criticizes as "willful folly." In short, Scott's treatment of this virtue is incomplete. Let us extrapolate.

As Scott (17) says, truth is dual: both the precepts I adhere to as well as the situation's demands and potentialities are involved. Responsibility is then also dual: I select the precepts yet act within the given situation. The consequences of my act as manifested in the next moment are unavoidable, given the nature of the situation and the nature of my act. I serve to create the next moment's circumstances, or, better, I am a co-creator of the course of events ("co-creator" not only in a community sense but also with the world at large). My action's consequences "follow" me wherever I "go." To utilize a commonplace saying, I made my bed and now I have no recourse but to sleep in it. Recognizing that we are co-creators, sleepers in our own beds, we recognize wherein our responsibility for ethical action lies.[36] Nietzsche's

"thus I willed it" must be extended to be "thus I willed it for myself" that personalizes ethics in the manner of Buddhist karma or the Christian Golden Rule.

Scott's discussion also implies a cascading set of obligations for the would-be ethical individual. The consequences of our actions ripple forward through time and, reminiscent of Buddhist karma, we have to live with what we have done. If the consequences of our actions are brought to our attention, we would need to respond responsibly to them as well — if they are brought to our attention and known as such. Within Scott's framework this qualifier brings us back to knowing, because I cannot respond to harms of which I am unaware or that I do not judge to be the result of my action. And it brings us back to the social construction of reality, because what-is-harmful would be an intersubjective construct, as would be that-for-which-I-am-responsible, degrees of responsibility, and extent of harm.

Because doing entails unforeseen consequences, our maximizing benefits while minimizing harms involves expectations for future events, judgments of likely outcomes, and risks. Responsible action is thus a question of prudential action, and our choices are not among conflicting claims and the situation's circumstances alone but possible eventualities as one perceives them to be. The ethical individual should then be well-informed and experienced about actions and their likely consequences — an observation that brings us back to knowing.

An appraisal of rhetoric-as-epistemic's ethic. My concerns are not for the three virtues themselves but for how they are connected to rhetoric-as-epistemic. Their connections to rhetoric-as-epistemic have varying degrees of cogency. Tolerance as well as intolerance can proceed from valuing, for example, inquiry too highly: the connection between tolerance and rhetoric-as-epistemic is thus minimal. Being willful is hard to avoid if, within Scott's framework, we cannot but act: the connection to rhetoric-as-epistemic is rather vacuous. Responsibility cannot be divorced from knowing: the connection to rhetoric-as-epistemic is therefore integral. The strongest connection is between rhetoric and responsibility, which perhaps is not surprising to rhetorical theorists — rhetoric concerns choices, and choosing entails being responsible. In contrast, tolerance and will are in some sense alternatives for

choice and thus not predicative of choosing in general. In our quest, tolerance and will assist us, says Scott, but the need to be responsible is inherent in the human condition.

Revaluing the human condition

In framing rhetoric-as-epistemic as he does, Scott faces another agonistic-transcendent "burden" in addition to revaluing "rhetoric" and "epistemic." His argument revalues our sense of what it is to be human. The key link from rhetoric-as-epistemic to his anthropology is the "tragic sense of life" and "contradictory claims."[37] We need to examine Scott as social theorist. Scott's views are more easily seen from his work as a whole.

Scott is clear as to the crucial question at stake in the discussions about rhetoric: What is it to be human?[38] To be human is to be physical, yet we are more than physical creatures. Scott's intersubjectivist theory of rhetoric indicates in what ways we are social creatures. To be human is to be social, and hence rhetorical. But are we more than physical and social creatures? Scott's articles say, No! For him, the dissoi logoi are conflicting social demands (perhaps physical as well),[39] the psychological is reduced to the social and anything non-social can be viewed as anti-social. One way to assess Scott's position is by exploring the implications of this view of the human condition with respect to human psychology and functioning. I will here explore the self and freedom, and human personality.

The self and freedom. Among other things, clarity into the present moment involves perceiving how I am an agent apart from society, albeit working with and within it. If Scott is correct about symbols being socially impregnated, then this sense of self is also socially impregnated: not only is a social reality socially constructed, but personal realities are as well — such is the consequence of Scott's position (cf. Orr, 1990, 122-26). Thus, to know myself I have to know society; as either is brought into focus the other is better known, too. All nonorganic psychopathology is, as another consequence, socially derived, as is normalcy. These implications appear to usher in an irresponsibility just as dire as those Scott wishes to avoid. I can argue that my way of thinking and in fact my entire way of being is socially impregnated and

thus I cannot go beyond the evil in which I found myself emersed at birth and in which I continue to be emersed. "I cannot do other than the evil I do, for society has so impregnated me. Society is at fault, but I am blameless." And with that, tolerance, will and responsibility are lost as surely as from Immutable Truth. For example, "I'm intolerant because that's how I was raised."[40]

To "escape" from this consequence, Scott (1977b, 261) says that in knowing our traditions we are free to "accept or reject some of its demands." Yet on this same page he admits, "The fact of having a culture with its traditions does not seem problematic at all; what may be problematic is the very notion of freedom to decide questions." What is not clarified in his discussion, what remains problematic, is how our thinking, as socially impregnated as it is due to the social symbols we need in order to think, and our acting, as also socially impregnated via the symbols concerning how we are to act, permits us to act and yet reject social demands.[41] Scott (1980, 52) says that the interplay of social and individual "allows for an openness not ordinarily taken as consistent with determinism," but does not discuss how individuality arises. In his discussion, Scott uses "humanity" and "human" rather than such words as "individual" or "personal." In general, throughout his work, "human" for Scott equals "social" and the human self is problematic.[42] He does not discuss how individuals can have their thinking and acting socially based and yet not be determined, or as is oft said "to be <u>in</u> the world but not <u>of</u> it,"[43] and thus does not explain upon what basis we can ever go beyond our socially-constituted selves.

From his numerous articles, Scott argues against such possibilities because of his overriding fear that not being <u>of</u> the world necessarily results in some form of Immutable Truth and its dire social consequences. For example, in Scott (1983) he takes Transcendentalism to be a quest for firm foundations of knowledge. Thus, in defending against Tukey's (1988, 1989) charge that intersubjectivist rhetorical theory denies a spiritual reality, Scott (1989b) responds that positing such a facet of our being human is tantamount to saying that rhetoric is dispensable.[44]

Human personality. If there are a multitude of social demands and conflicting claims, as Scott says, then our psyches are impregnated via conflicting symbols and tendencies. What implications for human personality arise from positing this condition as a fundamental aspect of the human condition?

First, there is an implicit theory of personality in Scott's view. Consistency models (e.g., George Kelly and Leon Festinger) describe the cognitive dissonance an individual faces in conflicting beliefs, obligations, ideational constructs, etc. and how the inconsistency is variously resolved or permuted. Scott's views emphasize the nature of such incompatibilities but says the "conflicting claims" persist, is, that they can never be resolved. The model of personality then implicated is one of inevitable conflict, differing only from psychologists such as Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung in the locus of the conflict. However, Scott's focus is neither on "intrapsychic conflict" (i.e., incompatibilities within the individual) or "psychosocial" conflict (i.e., between individual and society) but conflicts within the nature of the human condition itself. Lastly, in as much as humans are fated to face the "conflicting claims" without resolving them, Scott's framework is not a fulfillment model such as advanced by, for example, Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow or existential psychology. On the other hand, these views are more likely to stress human freedom, intentionality and will — themes important to Scott.[45] Thus with respect to the three major types of personality theory (as described by Maddi, 1976), Scott's view of the human condition is an amalgam of all three: human intentionality (fulfillment model) in the face of life's inevitable, inherent conflicts (conflict model) in so far as they are known consensually (consistency model).[46]

Second, inevitable conflict within the human situation brings to mind Martin Seligman's work on "learned helplessness." The classic account is from laboratory dogs who were conditioned to expect an electric shock whether they stayed where they were or jumped over a small barrier to another part of the cage; expecting shocks whatever they did, they stood in corners and quivered even after the experimental contingencies had changed. Seligman's work has been extended to various human situations (see, e.g., Garber & Seligman, 1980). If Scott is

correct about "conflicting claims," Seligman's framework must be further extended as being a fundamental quality of the human condition. An age of utter, ubiquitous uncertainty and inevitable harm would usher in an age of helplessness, a vacuum of will and resolve. It may be here that the seeds of totalitarianism are sown by a society viewing itself as a field of conflicting claims.[47] Might not an individual seek to reduce the inevitable, unresolvable "cognitive dissonance" and "helplessness" by willingly, even joyously, turning to a framework offering certainty? Are the social-psychological implications from Scott's framework that democratic rhetoric-as-epistemic declines into totalitarian truth-as-certain?[48] Ironically, we come to see rhetoric-as-epistemic as contingent, as an idea in time.

Third, the inevitable conflicts and conflicting social claims parallel Gregory Bateson's (e.g., 1972) notions of a "double bind." Individuals can find themselves within a "damned if you; damned if you don't" situation. This social context, in Bateson's view, is the genesis of schizophrenia.[49] More generally, neurosis can be viewed as the result of one's seeing into reality with utter clarity (cf. Becker, 1973). Scott (1977b) also stresses "clarity," so by implication Scott's view may — in a manner far different than Freud but with a similar result — view our being human as that of homo neuroticus.[50]

An appraisal. It is possible, I believe, to accept with some modifications Scott's analysis of an intersubjectivist rhetoric without accepting his views about what it is to be human. To this end we need to see where Scott crosses the line from rhetorical theorist to social theorist, where he becomes a discussant of the human potential for individuals as well as that for rhetoric. The pivotal passage in "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" (14) reads: "This analysis has led toward the tragic view of life." With respect to implications of Scott's argument, Scott errs: what was said about the nature of truth and debate does not support the claim about the tragic view of life. For example, "uncertainty" (about knowledge) does not imply "dissonance" or "conflicting" (social demands). To be sure, Scott perceives a link between his epistemology and his views of the human condition, but the link is not argued for in his article. Scott's article subsumes "the tragic sense of life." If the reader does not, Scott's

project to revalue "rhetoric" is jeopardized. With respect to agonistic-transcendent rhetoric, rhetoric-as-epistemic will be valued differently within different philosophies of life. If Scott does not sufficiently revalue our sense of what it is to be human, then rhetoric-as-epistemic "changes its stripes" within the reader's own context.

Ernest Becker's (1975) post-Freudian "escape from evil" involves finding the least repressive social illusions, illusions allowing for the most freedom and least harm to others.[51] Perhaps Scott has provided us with such an "illusion" for he presents those cardinal virtues that seem to accomplish precisely what Becker hopes can be accomplished via an adequate, socially constructed illusion. In one graphic passage, Scott (1972, 152) directly links truth-as-certain to evil: "much of the world's evil has sprung from the fertile soil richly manured with the rotten certainty of truth." That Scott explicitly offers us a choice of "illusions" is evident in this passage: "Although clearly I cannot detail an account-book for human history and must leave my appeal to the reader's own sense of history, even in the abstract it seems to me that contingency is much less to be feared in creating chaos, wantonly or whimsically, than the spirit of axiomatic detachment" (1977b, 264). "The intent of relativism seems unquestionably admirable" (Orr, 1990, 111), that is, as agonistic-transcendent rhetor Scott weaves a finer tapestry. But Scott's position also calls into question the nature of the very humanity it seeks to protect.

Scott disavows all non-social dimensions to our being human, making his theory of rhetoric do the work of a theory of reality.[52] As such he also crosses the line from social theorist to cosmic theorist. Alternatively we can posit a transcendent dimension of being human, a view that in rhetorical theory can be traced back to Plato's Phaedrus.[53] But what needs to be gleaned from Plato is neither the Immortal Forms that provide us with Immutable Truth, nor a substrate over and against the social to ground us, but the necessary and sufficient conditions that allow for the development and growth of our inherent potentials to participate with the world in its and our becoming — ontogenesis.[54] I mention this alternative here not to argue for it, but to indicate choices available within Scott's framework for rhetoric-as-

epistemic.

Furthermore, it is possible to take many of the same ideas from Scott's article and conjoin them in a manner that is not "tragic." Consider, for example, this passage by the German theologian Hans Küng (1976, 158-59):

> Indubitable mathematical or scientific certainty is not to be expected from any historical argumentation. With Jesus as with Socrates, and in varying degrees with all historical personalities, it is often possible to reach only a more or less high degree of probability. Our knowledge — beginning with the question whether my legal father is my real father — is of course based to a large extent on such probabilities. And, in order to be defensible, faith no more needs a guaranteed infallible knowledge at its disposal than love does. Like all human knowledge, the knowledge of faith is also fragmentary. Only when faith remains aware of this does it remain free from arrogance, intolerance and false zeal.

Aside from Küng's presumption that science yields certainty, his statement accords well with what Scott has said about analytic argument, certainty, and implications for ethics. Indeed, Küng's statement suggests that we need to revalue "faith" as being fallible and thus open to criticism (cf. Küng, 1980, for a discussion of faith and reason). For example, his "faith" may be synonymous with Polanyi's "tacit dimension" and the working through of implications within commitment (see below).[55] Scott (1989b) even suggests rhetoric has a role in maintaining one's faith. At the same time, it would be difficult to view Küng's perspective on the human condition as being inevitably "tragic" even if it is existential.

Whether we prefer Scott's view of the human condition, Küng's or someone else's, there are two observations to emphasize: (1) Shifts in our notions of epistemology (what I can know) do not entail a particular anthropology (what I can be), even if humility about our knowing may entail a particular ethic: epistemology does not determine anthropology. (2) What we know of the social condition from viewing rhetoric as epistemic does not foreclose our freedom to situate ourselves within the more encompassing human condition: rhetorical knowing does not

determine our modes of being-in-the-world. These observations point out that rhetoric-as-epistemic may be a suitable construct within approaches to the human condition with which Scott would be in disagreement. If so, the agonistic-transcendent project of revaluing "rhetoric" would need to be cognizant of how various revaluations play out within different anthropologies.

A summary rhetorical critique

We can note a rhetor's aim in writing a scholarly article by two important statements: the article's opening abstract and its final statements. The abstract for "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" directly precedes Scott's text, so it serves to frame the reader's attention. The abstract, it should be noted, focuses on "truth," namely "making the truth effective" versus truth-as-contingent — nothing else (9). Scott's (17) final two paragraphs serve to point the reader's attention to issues that were means to argue against "making the truth effective" rather than advocate a position: truth is not fixed but rather contingent; as a consequence, rhetoric is epistemic and a way of knowing; this view of life entails uncertainties, but to view the world otherwise gives no legitimate role to rhetoric. The emphases illustrate the problem in a nutshell. Absent is any reference to the relation of knowing and doing, cooperative critical inquiry, life's inevitable tragic sense, or the ethical implications of rhetoric-as-epistemic.

As agonistic-transcendent rhetoric, Scott's "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" fails to accomplish its ends. Scott's arguments and choice of words revalued "rhetoric" but insufficiently revalued "epistemic" and thus were insufficient for establishing a revaluation of the fundamental relationship between rhetoric and epistemology. Because of this, the normative and ethical dimensions of rhetoric-as-epistemic were eclipsed by concerns regarding the nature of rhetoric, knowledge, and truth. The claim that knowing and doing are inexorably linked gets lost as well, and the (tragic) existential position grounding Scott's discussion can be ignored. The field revalued "rhetoric" and in its "greed" and "zeal" proceeded to link rhetoric with commonly-held notions of the goals of epistemology without at the same time asking

whether Scott's rhetoric-as-epistemic was consonant with this conjunction of themes.

Rhetoric-as-epistemic was not understood, the fault lying not in the stars but in the rhetor. This judgment is not to gibe at Scott, far from it. I mean to indicate that, consonant with his own position, he must bear the responsibility for the inevitable harms resulting from his choices as rhetor.[56] I therefore do not view Scott's (1988, 1990) concerns about "epistemic" to be a recantation of his position at all. He is merely pointing out that his choices may have been errant.[57] His statements do not argue against rhetoric-as-epistemic per se but against how we have tended to revalue the concepts involved. Further, these apologetic statements are not made in the context of his committing himself to an alternate position: in both cases his role was as critic of another's views (Vitanza and Brummett, respectively). If anything, Scott seeks to advance his position in different ways. His sequel "ten years after" (1977b, 259) states this aim explicitly. As agonistic-transcendent rhetor, Scott accepts the unfulfilled task, the incompleteness of his project and attempts to redeem the situation he created by moving the discussion forward into yet another uncertain future. In agonistic-transcendent rhetoric, the rhetor's discourse and our judgment of it are inexorably linked. The discourse, especially if concerned with ethics, provides a standard which that discourse itself must meet.

Scott as agonistic-transcendent theorist

If we adopt an agonistic-transcendent framework, our view of "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" must shift from one of viewing Scott as rhetorical theorist to Scott as change-agent. And if analytic arguments are no longer to be our ideal, we must shift from mimicking an axiomatic system with its stress on definition and entailment to one of axiology, that is, to human values and valuing. Recall Scott's criticism of Ehninger and Brockriede that they sought to define "debate" rather than lay out normative standards for its practice. In this context, Scott's (1973) later suggestion that we not define "rhetoric" is apt, as is his (1989a) "against rhetorical theory." His (1981) concern with the "tacit dimension" of rhetoric is

fitting, as is his shift away from "certainty" and "knowledge." "Rhetoric" is not the only term revalued in Scott's work. In other articles he revalues, for example, "rationalism" (1968a), "fact" (1968b), "commitment" (1977b), "control" and "prediction" (1978), "relativism" (1977b, 1989b) and "silence" (1993). Agonistic-transcendent thus provides a coherence, a gestalt for Scott's thought that rhetoric-as-epistemic, as interpreted by most scholars, fails to do.

A hidden research program: "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" in context

Scott's "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" should not merely be cited or viewed solely as a source of quotations on banners for epistemic rhetoric. It needs to be examined in its entirety, as a whole, with the commingled ideas of analytic truth, inquiry, knowing and doing, time, toleration, will, responsibility, certainty and normative standards. At the same time, as the subtext of the present article attests, Scott's article needs to be read in the context of his other work in rhetoric, and not only those articles using both "rhetoric" and "epistemic" in their titles. In this wider context, is "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" the best articulation Scott has provided? I think not. His earlier and infrequently cited "Some implications of existentialism for rhetoric" (1964) connects the issues better. For example, this prelude to rhetoric-as-epistemic refers to commitment, a theme absent in "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" but evident in many other articles, as I mentioned above. Moreover, in the wider context, Scott's thought foreshadows a shift in conceptual frameworks, a shift rhetorical theorists have not explored.

"Clarity" and "understanding". In "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" Scott argues against certainty. In Scott (1977b, 261) he refers to the notion of "clarity" that Hans-Georg Gadamer suggests "belongs to the tradition of rhetoric": "Nothing is clear in and of itself but in some context for some persons." "Clarity," in other words, is contingent. Scott goes on to say that rhetorical clarity may involve knowing one's traditions, knowing them to be malleable, and knowing that one influences them. In essence, clarity of the rhetorical variety involves a perception into the present moment with regard to one's socially-constituted and mutually-

influencing self. More broadly, clarity into the present moment would likely involve perceiving the demands of the situation, its beneficial and harmful potentialities, our potentialities for acting, etc.[58] It is such clarity, brought into focus in action (i.e., during the act) that enables one to create truth, to know truth and (in the reconceptualized view) act with certainty. What Scott says of rhetoric applies as well to what he says in "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" concerning acting in general.

Scott's shift from "certainty" to "clarity" mirrors a shift he makes from "knowledge" to "understanding." Scott (1977b, 262) expresses a preference for "understanding" as opposed to "knowing":

> By "knowing" we may stress a sense of from-the-outside-in, taking knowledge as an external anchor point that may bring one into a more consistent relationship with the world that is more then oneself. By "understanding" we may stress the sense of from-the-inside-out, taking understanding as a human and personal capacity to embrace what is outside the self, creating rather than finding meaning in the world.

The problem is the ancient one of the objective and the subjective. "Knowing" seems to suggest that humans are subordinate to the world, a relation Scott (1975) views as fostering elitism, while "understanding" is reminiscent of Polanyi's (1958/1962) "personal" knowledge. Scott chooses the subjective, and thus "understanding."

Scott (1981, 118-19) has also suggested a shift from "meaning-creating" to "meaning-achieving." "Created" and "achieved" are synonyms to some extent, but the former may suggest a creator-created, superior-subordinate relation while the latter suggests activity with or among. To extrapolate from Polanyi and Prosch (1975), it is in participating with the world that we achieve knowledge of it, an act of integration also serving to alter the knower (see discussion below).[59]

Scott's use of different terms solves a potential problem: in the context of rhetorical theory they do not have the same semantic "freight." As such, using them signals a novel way of

looking at rhetoric, and thus an approach revaluing the nature of the issues. These revalued constructs aside, what is the prognosis for the revaluation Scott hopes to accomplish for "rhetoric"?

Whither rhetoric-as-epistemic?

To recall Leff's (1978, 77) remark, rhetoric-as-epistemic was welcomed by rhetorical theorists "with greedy enthusiasm and . . . attempt[s] to gulp it down whole." The current context is different. Brummett (1990a) argues that the epistemic emphasis in rhetorical theory has degenerated. Scott (1990) responds that the framework may have become so basic to Brummett's thinking that it is now tacit. Be that as it may — I seek neither to eulogize a corpse nor reprimand the coroner for ill judgment but to indicate that rhetorical theorists have a choice to make.

On the one hand, the perplexities surrounding rhetoric-as-epistemic may foreshadow what philosophers of science might term a "degenerating research program" (Lakatos, 1970, 116-32) or a "paradigm shift" (Kuhn, 1970) (cf. Weimer, 1979). In this event, rhetoric-as-epistemic will be abandoned. When logic-as-epistemic (i.e., the analytic ideal) was abandoned, "rhetoric" replaced "logic" in the phrase. But rhetoric-as-epistemic retains problems about "epistemic." If we shift away from analytical certainty and then also away from "knowledge," the next shift may not concern which term precedes "as" but which follows it. To modify a title of one of Scott's articles, the next, genuinely "new" rhetoric may not be "epistemic" — that is, we will abandon the research program (paradigm). There are no doubt many theorists today, Whitson and Poulakos among them, trying to fill the blank in "rhetoric as ____" with what they view as suitable predicates.

The alternative to abandonment is redemption. With this motive we must with as much "clarity" as possible "redeem" the "inevitable harm" Scott's article "achieved" and, "acting" with as much "willful" "responsibility" and "understanding" as we can muster in the "present moment," "commit" ourselves (again) to our "uncertain" future, our "redeemable" past, by "revaluing" the "conflicting claims" of viewing "rhetoric" as

epistemic. For the present article at least, the latter alternative is the one I have followed. If I am not incorrect, it is also the choice Scott has made and will make. Terminological shifts aside, his main emphases linking rhetoric to human conduct remain within his research program. At the same time, to revalue rhetoric-as-epistemic we may need to add other pieces to the puzzle and go beyond Scott's work.

Revaluing rhetoric-as-epistemic

As Scott (1987, 59) noted, the three roles of the critic are to understand a discourse's arguments, judge them, and then proceed to act in other ways. I now turn to this latter role. In so doing I hope to accomplish two, related aims: (1) explicate rhetoric-as-epistemic with respect to "tacit knowing," and (2) extend Scott's temporal shift to certainty and thereby discuss commitment and conviction within the act. These aims serve to highlight ways in which rhetoric-as-epistemic can be "redeemed" in a slightly different fashion than perhaps Scott would while also retaining much that he would find worthwhile in his approach.

The tacit dimension

If we are not to abandon Scott's assumption that knowing and doing are interwoven within the human experience, then it would be useful to have a different account of how they are related. Michael Polanyi's philosophy provides such an account. His views of tacit knowing and from-to awareness are of particular interest to the present discussion since Scott (1981) has expressed sympathy for "the tacit dimension" of persuading. Polanyi's views are not offered here as an alternative to Scott's framework but to find a means for understanding rhetoric-as-epistemic better. To the extent that Polanyi's framework mirrors Scott's, the more I understand issues within the former the more I will find parallel issues in the latter. Parallels from Polanyi to Scott will be noted in the course of the explication.

Tacit knowing. For Polanyi (1969, 132) "Knowledge is an activity which would be better described as a process of knowing": "all knowing is action" (Polanyi & Prosch, 1975,

42). As one of his commentators notes (Grene, 1969, xi):

> Unlike the traditional ideal of a wholly explicit, self-guaranteeing truth, from-to [i.e., tacit] knowledge cannot be instantaneous; it is a stretch, not only of attention, but of effort, effort must be lived, and living takes time. Knowledge, therefore, is imbedded both in living process . . . and in the uniquely human form of living process: in history.[60]

Polanyi's framework thus sides with truth-as-contingent as opposed to Immutable Truth. Further, knowing is a skill, thus a feat performed, "in time."

Polanyi and Prosch (1975) describe as fundamental to all knowing what is called the "from-to relation": <u>from</u> the proximal particulars <u>to</u> the distal object, "dwelling in" the former to know as meaningful the latter (see also, e.g., Polanyi, 1966, 1969; Gelwick, 1977; Scott, 1981). Further, every "indwelling" involves a tacit commitment to a frame of reference rendering meaningful the particulars to be integrated. Tacit knowing and from-to awareness pertains to a wide range of actions, from, for example, riding a bicycle to scientific experiments to religious rituals. As "doing" necessarily involves a tacit frame of reference via which particulars are integrated into a meaningful whole, "knowing" results from "doing." We know more than we can tell inasmuch as knowing is tacit rather than explicit (Polanyi, 1969, 133). We also go beyond the information given, similar to Toulmin's (1958/1969, 224) "type shift" of substantial arguments (cf. Scott, 1967, 12). In addition, "the conception of from-to knowledge puts <u>responsibility</u> squarely at the centre [sic] of epistemology" (Grene, 1969, xii, emphasis in original); knowing and doing are related, and one must assume one's responsibilities.

Rhetoric as a human activity is therefore epistemic and cannot be otherwise. In acting, tacit frames of reference will ground our perceptions of the situation and guide our actions. Reminiscent of Toulmin's discussion, our knowledge is thus contingent in the sense of relative to tacit frames of reference. Since there is no absolute frame of reference, there is no certain knowledge.[61] "Tacit knowing," then, is a way to link "doing" and "knowing" while also

defeating Immutable Truth. Knowing more than we can tell is similar to Scott's (1973) statement that prior to defining "rhetoric" we have a sense of the rhetorical dimension. Lastly, responsibility is, of course, a key theme within rhetoric-as-epistemic.

Attention. Polanyi (1969, 128) discusses two kinds of attention: subsidiary and focal. Focal attention views the particulars themselves; subsidiary attention views the particulars in order to examine their context and meaning (cf. chap 4 of Polanyi, 1958/1962).[62] Polanyi (1969, 129) talks of complementary movements, a "see saw," between these two kinds of attention and their associated analysis and integration.

Consider the case of values. They can be viewed directly or used tacitly to view a situation. Perhaps a discussion of a value makes the value focal while a discussion of how to act in a given situation makes the value subsidiary. Agonistic-transcendent rhetoric, then, makes focal what we have been treating as tacit in order to modify how the particulars are known within a new Gestalt, that is, revalued.[63]

Individual capacities and responsibilities. However, since our individual abilities to accomplish novel integrations will differ (cf. Polanyi, 1969; Polanyi & Prosch, 1975, 42-3), meanings are social only to the extent that a number of individuals can "see" the meaning in similar ways. Social processes will influence a person's meanings, but the process of rendering something meaningful is fundamentally a psychological one, that is, arises from individual perceptual and cognitive processes. At the same time, cultural factors are significant, not incidental. The following passage explicates this point while also addressing other matters of interest to our discussion of rhetoric-as-epistemic.

> I accept the obligation to search for the truth through my own intimations of reality, knowing that there is, and can be, no strict rule by which my conclusions can be justified. . . . I must admit that I can fulfil [sic] my obligation to serve the truth only to the extent of my natural abilities as developed by my education. No one can transcend his formative milieu very far, and beyond this area he must rely on it uncritically. I consider that this matrix of my thought

> determines my personal calling. It both offers me my opportunity for seeking the truth, and limits my responsibility for arriving at my own conclusions. This conception of knowledge . . . accredits man's capacity to acquire knowledge even though he cannot specify the grounds of his knowing, and it accepts the fact that his knowing is exercised within an accidentally given framework that is largely unspecifiable. . . . The structure of knowing . . . fuses our subsidiary awareness of the particulars belonging to our subject matter with the cultural background of our knowing. (Polanyi, 1969, 133-4)

Knowing is a skill, thus it is learned and to some extent trained (Polanyi & Prosch, 1975, 42-3). At the same time, knowing is indeterminate, contextual and unspecifiable. My knowing/doing can also exhibit novelty: the fusing of subsidiary particulars with my skills has an indeterminate outcome due to the function of personal imagination (Polanyi & Prosch, 1975, 63-5, 133).[64]

Several themes Scott expresses are evident in the passage: (a) knowing as contingent, and dual — situational and cultural; (b) the obligation to search — will; (c) knowing as a leap beyond the information given — Toulmin's "type shift;" (d) skills as tacit — cf. Scott's (1973) notion about our having a sense of the rhetorical, (e) owning our conclusions — cf. Scott's (1977b, 260) quoting Grace de Laguna to the effect that the world we are born into is not really ours until we make it our own, adding that rhetoric is a means for doing so.

One evident contrast with Scott's framework is the notion that skills are individual, that one's imagination plays a role in knowing, and thus that all knowing is personal. This does not mean that cultural factors are not involved, for they are, but the individual does not interiorize cultural precepts (claims). What becomes tacit for the knower is not something outside of the act but integral to it. There may be a great deal of correspondence among persons in how they integrate particulars into meaningful wholes in given situations, a correspondence rhetoric may strive to enhance, but knowing is personal, the action of individuals. Meanings are shared when we dwell in particulars in similar ways, not because we have meaningful wholes we then

communicate. To this extent, Polanyi's framework may argue against aspects of Scott's intersubjectivist approach to rhetoric. It is almost as Gorgias said: "if anything is and can be known, it cannot be communicated" (Scott, 1967, 15).

Life's incompatibles. Polanyi and Prosch (1975, 156) talk about the "incompatibles that make up the whole stance of our lives," that is, the resolutions of particulars into gestalts are not given in human experience but are achieved. Moreover —

> In a practical sense these fundamental incompatibles are often resolved by throwing away one or the other. The megalomaniac rejects his frailties, the opportunist rejects his obligations, and the suicide rejects his hope. The sane man, we say, holds all these incompatible factors together in a sort of permanent tension, hoping that somehow he may be given the power to do what he knows he must, but living in the meantime humbly within the limits of his capacities — within his "calling" in the broadest sense of this word.

Scott's notion of conflicting claims and omnipresent dissoi logoi are evident. Polanyi and Prosch suggest that the mature, psychological healthy person will find a way to work within the tensions. This is the ideal mode of being-in-the-world for Scott's ethical rhetor (cf. Scott, 1967, 16). At the same time, life is not tragic. Polanyi's discussion implies that our knowing evolves into a greater intimacy with the world.[65]

Applications to rhetoric. If "tacit knowing" serves to explicate Scott's position, then we must identify the particulars and the object. What can we infer from Scott's article in this regard? The object of attention is an exigence calling for an act. The particulars are such material as conflicting claims and alternatives as Scott emphasizes, but also expectations concerning the consequences of possible courses of action and my awareness of historical events and the "lessons of history." Of course, the particulars are not necessarily explicit. As Polanyi says, we know more than we can tell.

Unlike for Scott's three illustrative examples, tacit knowing says that the situation facing an individual involves not so much a choice among alternatives but an integration of

particulars into a Gestalt that in that moment of resolution eventuates into action. The resolution entails an implicit choice among conflicting claims, but this is a retrospective reconstruction of the individual's decision, not actually what happens. I do not choose one precept over another and then act. Rather, I am led to acting in a way that seems to you as if a certain precept was the foundation for my decision. Indeed, I may discover a new framework in attending from the particulars to a new Gestalt.[66] Polanyi's view may not resolve questions concerning how the particulars arise. His framework suggests that, to some extent, they are simply there because of who I am, that is, my being sentient. Polanyi relates particulars to bodily information, suggesting an inherent intimacy (interiority) of the particulars of the act with the actor. The rhetor, of course, chooses particulars to present in the hope that the Gestalt the members of the audience achieve are those intended.[67] The audience's Gestalt, of course, can represent a creative, novel achievement. As a corollary, it is by dwelling in (rather than typifying) a rhetor's discourse that we understand the underlying being presented to us.[68]

Tacit knowing has the same serendipitous quality that rhetoric-as-epistemic suggests is rhetoric's. There would also be a serendipitous quality in how values emerge in acting for no set of precepts fully specifies how to act within all concrete situations — Weimer (1979, 68-76) makes this point in reference to the guidance of scientific research but his observation applies equally to all human contexts involving skillful application of rules. If the fusing of particulars and the perceiver's skills is indeterminate, then we do not know prior to our tacit knowing how the rules will be played out in the situation.

In this interpretation, the knowing that accompanies doing is an inspiration that carries its own justification or authority with it: both knowing and its justification are contingent. Claiming and assessing claims are linked in this sense. Tacit knowing thus emphasizes the temporal shift Scott made, but also suggests that the shift be extended to concepts Scott did not revalue, such as "certainty."

Conviction as contingent

The ethic for rhetoric that Scott advances derives from viewing truth as contingent. "Truth" is re-conceptualized via a shift in temporality. As what-is-true is also what-is-known (i.e., "truth" is "knowledge"), what is known is also contingent. "Certainty," however, is not treated in the same way; it is not re-conceptualized. Yet we experience certainty in terms of, for example, strong convictions and commitments. We can extrapolate from Scott's philosophical arguments about Immutable Truth and consider implications from extending his temporal shift. The temporal is crucial for Scott, as has been noted. Scott redefines "truth" by shifting the temporal context from the everlasting to the here and gone. Scott argues against Immutable Truth and thus against "certain truth."

But if truth is contingent (i.e., of the moment), why not certainty as well?[69] Scott might refer us to those Sophistic dissoi logoi again, and conflicting claims. Of the fork in the road one alternative is taken; of the dissoi logoi one logos is followed. A choice is made, and in that act truth and knowledge are created — so much Scott argues. What he seems to forget is that in the act the dissoi logoi do not exist.[70] The manifold conflicting claims as potentia are resolved in action into a single yet pluriform NOW. But resolving the claims does not destroy them; they are there just the same for the next act (though perhaps our action may have modified them). Acting does not resolve the dissoi logoi for all time but only re-solves them "momentarily."[71] Truth and knowledge are re-created each moment. It would not be inconsistent to say certainty is re-created as well. We could make the temporal shift complete and view knowledge, truth and certainty as contingent.[72]

This notion of certainty being contingent is reminiscent of Pepper's (1942/1970, 13-16) discussion of "conviction." For Pepper, "belief" (or "credibility") is a cognitive judgment and concerns the grounds one has for believing that, for example, it will rain tomorrow. "Conviction," in contrast, is a practical and ethical judgment concerning a reasonable course of action (e.g., to take my raincoat tomorrow). These judgments are interrelated, but they are not identical. The dogmatist, for example, is not necessarily one who acts with conviction and assurance, nor is the resolute individual dogmatic. Both credibility and

conviction are important for Scott's discussion because knowing and doing are conjoined.

But does smuggling certainty in the door in the guise of conviction plague our rhetorical house with the "mortal sins" of intolerance, the failure to participate and irresponsibility? Can we admit "conviction" and still avoid the evil fate Scott wishes to avoid? Let us examine the three virtues.

Tolerance. Insofar as I am unable to "put myself in your shoes" I must be tolerant. Why? Because in the act there is truth and knowledge; as I did not perform your act I do not know nor can I legitimately claim to know the truth of the situation. I can be (momentarily) convicted of what I do (in a moment), but I cannot be certain (or convicted) of what you do. (Unless, perhaps, I act and thereby within my act have a conviction about what your act involved, as is presumably the case with rhetorical criticism or a from-to awareness of the meaning of your act.) Tolerance can yet be a virtue, and it will yet arise from our humble origins and nature.

Will. With respect to certainty Scott (16) says, "If one can be certain, then one needs no commands or urgings (either from oneself or from others) to act. Failure to act can only be a sign of a momentary misunderstanding or of a flawed intellect." If in the act is conviction, there is no need for commands from outside that act to motivate us: the action carries with it its own motivations.[73] However, "lack of participation" is different with respect to conviction. For Scott, such inaction "ought be considered ethical failure" (16). But what is the truth of someone's inaction or failure to participate? Scott presumes it is due to some lack of will, a withdrawal "from the conflicts of life." But upon what basis can we make this judgment? If we withdraw and isolate ourselves, can this act not be a responsible choice given the conflicting claims in the situation? Tolerance seems to recommend that we impute to others their being aware of the dissoi logoi and acting thereon, otherwise we must say that we are more aware than they — establishing an elitism Scott would wish to avoid. And yet Scott judges nonparticipation to be unethical a priori without reference to any particular human situation, any contingency, any time. His judgment is thus "immutable" and inconsistent with the thrust of his position.

In contrast, we could say that one's will is what occasions conviction in one's act. Will can be viewed as a concentrating force, concentrating the actor in an act; to act in an unconcentrated manner is to act without full will.[74] As such, the actor is not divided and momentarily there are no conflicting claims, whence arises conviction. To act willfully, the conflicting claims are reduced to a single claim.[75]

Responsibility. Finally, regarding responsibility, Scott states, "If one can act with certainty of truth then any effects of that action can be viewed as inevitable, that is, determined by the principles for which the individual is simply the instrument . . . [and thus] beyond ethical demands, for he says, in effect, 'It is not I who am responsible'" (16). If conviction comes with rather than prior to the act, one is not acting from principles but in the act choosing those principles. Indeed, in acting we select which of the dissoi logoi to manifest. As such, it is unlikely that one's act does not (temporality aside) "follow from" the principles chosen, that somehow they are inconsistent or discordant; to use Toulmin, the principles chosen support the act. But inasmuch as one chooses the principle as well as the act, we cannot be absolved of the effects even if "inevitable." Although someone with Immutable Truth can be "absolved" via being grounded in that Truth as lived out in a situation, one acting with conviction cannot so stand.

If there is any absolution at all it would have to derive from the situation itself: as the Soothsayer told Zarathustra, you must redeem the past by an act of re-creation. But if a situation provides a basis for absolving a past action, it must also be admitted that absolution fades even as the truth and knowledge and certainty of the situation fade: absolution is not eternal, but happens moment by moment (if at all). Does this mean we are therefore irresponsible, as Scott may wish to object? No, because absolution qua forgiveness does not mean you can forget the consequences, in some sense divorcing yourself from the effects of your acts. I act with conviction, thus creating situational truth and knowledge, as well as situational consequences. I am thus accountable for the choices I made. Hopefully, I maximized the good and minimized the harm, just as Scott hopes agents can do. But if some harm is "inevitable," as

Scott admits, can I be blamed for doing the best (e.g., maximal social benefit) I could have done given the circumstances of the situation? In the act, I am (momentarily) convicted that I am doing my best for the common weal; outside of that act (thus in a different act), I am not and thus can be plagued by doubts and guilt concerning everything I have done and served to co-create. It is just as Scott says: "To act with intentions for good consequences, but to accept the responsibilities for all the consequences in so far as they can be known is part of what being ethical must mean" (17).

Implications. Conviction has been discussed in some detail because of the ethical consequences Scott wishes to defend. Certainty-as-contingent, that is, of and within the act as "conviction," is consonant with Scott's ethic for rhetoric.[76] As a consequence, the customary relations among truth, knowledge and certainty can be retained within a revalued framework. What is gained in shifting our focus from omnipresent uncertainty to momentary conviction if Scott's position avoids the dire consequences for ethics already? The major advantage, as discussed above, is that we have a more complete understanding of "will" as part of the act, a conception more reflective of human experience. Second, extending the temporal shift harmonizes with Scott's consideration of facts as being "in time."[77] We tend to think of facts as observations having high degrees of certitude, thus "fact" and "certainty" are linked. If the former is "in time," then something analogous to "certainty" is as well. A third advantage is that we are able to discuss "commitment" in the act, albeit as defined "situationally."

Conviction, we have said, pertains to the act, to a particular moment in time. Tacit knowing, of course, involves tacit commitments. But we tend to think of commitments as adherences to precepts that then found our actions — commitments prior to acting. We must therefore revalue "commitment" lest it be misunderstood as a smuggled-in dogmatism. I feel my concerns are well-founded because rhetorical theorists insist on finding antecedents to speaking. The following passage will illustrate:

> Everyone — acting as source or receiver — operates within an ethical perspective or value system which dictates his or her communicative behavior.

> In short, an individual's ethics affect his construction of messages as well as his perception of incoming communiques. Rhetoric, then, is a process grounded in 'choice' which is dependent on the values of those engaged in the communicative act. Inevitably, therefore, ethics and rhetoric are inseparable. . . . For our purposes, ethics is concerned with the values of the communicator as revealed in his rhetorical behavior. (Golden et al., 1983, 270)

The underlying presumption is that one (first) has values that are (then) enacted in choices, that is, our commitments to values are prior to speaking. Our perspective differs if commitments are contingent, that is, within acts.

But how can commitments (to which we attribute some security) be contingent (e.g., insecure, vulnerable)? The question is important within Scott's framework because he discusses "commitment" in several articles. The final goal of my investigation is to explicate how "commitment" can be understood as being contingent, an aspect of knowing and thus harmonious with Scott's views.

Commitment as contingent

Scott's own articles lead us to examine "commitment." Scott (1967, 17) refers to the "precepts one adheres to" and commitment is implicated. "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic," in turn, is based on and in many ways is a reworking of "Some implications for existentialism for rhetoric" that sought to inquire into a "rhetoric of commitment, its philosophy, its description, and perhaps its techniques" (Scott, 1964, 275). A significant and explicit focus of Scott (1977b) is his revaluing "commitment" that he says stands in a reciprocal relation with rhetoric (263). Scott's (1976) notion of agonistic-transcendent rhetoric involves both a commitment and a resolution regarding values. The epigram to Scott's (1983, 1) "Can a new rhetoric be epistemic?" from Michael Polanyi reads "Such is man's relation to his ideas, he can only know them by freely following them;" Polanyi's (1958/1962, 377) next sentence reads, "This has been said before in the chapter on Commitment." Focusing on "commitment"

leads us further toward understanding and revaluing the bases of Scott's views of rhetoric.

Commitment and rhetoric. In Scott's framework, there is an omnipresent uncertainty and yet there is also commitment. "Commitment" tends to be construed as an unchangeable position, as akin to dogmatism, to beliefs and values one holds with absolute certainty. If "certainty" qua conviction can be re-conceptualized as being contingent, then perhaps "commitment" needs to be re-conceptualized and revalued as well. More importantly, commitment and rhetoric-as-epistemic are integrally related.

Scott's "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic: ten years later" (1977b, 263) has this to say about "commitment":

> But the fact that much, probably most, of our behavior is well fixed through complex reinforcements does not mean that we cannot become focally aware of these patterns and their consequences. When we do become so aware, then we can act critically, and usually rhetorically, to reaffirm or modify them, in short, to become more fully committed. . . . Commitment and rhetoric stand in a reciprocal relationship: commitment generates rhetoric, and rhetoric generates commitment.

Scott's "more fully committed" feels out of place given his emphasis on uncertainty and aversion to absoluteness. His statement is softened, however, by his phrase "reaffirm or modify." The awareness of our fixed behavior allows (in some fashion Scott does not explore) for us to modify our commitments. Further, in discussing Polanyi's views, Scott (1981, 123) says regarding "commitment": "The test of genuineness in commitment, then, is a double test: affiliation necessitates acting to persuade others, and conviviality demands that the persuader stand ready to be persuaded, not simply by counter-advocacy but by the disbelief of others." "Commitment," then, is not antithetical to rhetoric-as-epistemic but reciprocal to it.

Commitment has been linked to values by other rhetorical theorists as well. Eubanks (1983, 288), for example, talks about "value-commitment" in that values carry with themselves commands for action and commitment.

> Values . . . assert themselves in our judgment decisions and actions as commitments, which in their ultimate form 'place us at stake as persons.' Commitment, which I hold to be the axial term of a system of humane rhetoric, is grounded in the imperatives of value, or in what is commonly termed in the literature of value theory, 'the axiological ought.'" (emphases in original)

It is not surprising to find Scott linking values and commitment in his work as well.

Similar to my discussion of tacit knowing, I will here explore the connections among rhetoric and commitment with respect to another articulation of their relation — namely that of comprehensively critical rationalism.

Comprehensively critical rationalism. One framework for explicating argumentative "commitment" in the act that also addresses the nature of rationality and the role of criticism stems from what William W. Bartley III (1962) and Walter Weimer (1977b, 1979) call "comprehensively critical rationalism" (or hereafter CCR).[78] By CCR they mean that one is never dogmatic in holding to a belief, that all beliefs are criticizable (i.e., open to criticism) and yet that commitments are possible within a given criticism or argument. The parallel to the above discussion is this: dogmatism entails Immutable Truth, with all of the consequences Scott notes and abhors. To counter dogmatism CCR advances a comprehensive criticism much like Scott elevates uncertainty. However, in a given argument one can have commitments to provide a context for the discussion, much like we can in a given act have conviction. Weimer (1979) labels the approach "nonjustificational" for there is no "forever" justification or foundation for knowledge: the goal of finding a permanent justification is abandoned.[79] Bartley's and Weimer's discussions are epistemically concerned, as is Scott's, so they ought to receive more attention from rhetoricians.[80] Further, the nonjustificational approach is concordant with an "evolutionary epistemology" or the view of knowledge-in-process that Scott (and Brummett, e.g., 1976, 1990b, another intersubjectivist theorist) wish to espouse.

CCR also harmonizes with "factual relativity," the notion that "facts" are never given as known data but are such only with respect to a perspective. Scott is aware of this aspect of

facts: "statements of fact will always be relative in some way to human purposing. . . . A 'true fact' is thus a design-bound fact" (1968b, 118-21, emphasis in original). Scott defines "fact" by notions of verification and sense data, philosophical moves that are appropriate only within justificational metatheories of knowledge, and then says that the criteria for establishing something as a fact constitute an "unattainable ideal" since "No matter how consistent we are, we humanize our facts to some degree and our reports about facts are always colored accordingly" (118). Instead of defining facts in an such a way as to render their existence impossible, we can view statements of fact as claims, and thus arguments open to criticism. Even "data" in an argument are not given in the sense of "beyond doubt": "the purpose of an argument is to establish conclusions about which we are not entirely confident by relating them back to other information about which we have greater assurance" (Toulmin, 1958/1969, 127). "Greater assurance," of course, does not mean "know with immutable certainty."

For the present discussion it must be emphasized that CCR is against ultimate commitment (what Scott might call "immutable certainty") but allows for argumentative commitment (or what is here called "conviction"). The distinctions must be kept in mind, else one may misperceive the allowance of commitment as opening wide the door to dogmatism, intolerance, etc. The kinds of commitment CCR allows for do not result in a neo-dogmatism, however, anymore than conviction results in a neo-intolerance or neo-irresponsibility (as argued above). And as Bartley (1962, 1984) indicates, CCR does not presuppose or require itself: the process of criticism can lead to the abandonment of criticism.[81] At the same time, CCR avoids a skepticism that Scott may not escape if uncertainty is elevated into an overriding principle.[82] It also allows for the freedom Scott's existentialism would espouse: "Freedom . . . requires recognition of the contextual borders within which any answer has its worth. We act freely . . . when we can perceive the worth of any answer within its limited temporal context" (Shirk, 1965, 355).[83]

As C. Jack Orr (1990, 121-22) notes, CCR and rhetorical relativism ("constructionism") are similar in many ways. There are also commonalities between CCR and

existentialism (Orr, 1990, 142). It is therefore not surprising that the foregoing discussion of CCR accords with Scott's "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" for this article has aspects of both relativism and existentialism.[84] CCR is also concerned with the evaluation of arguments, and thus links the discussion to Toulmin. Moreover, Scott's position that he himself has referred to as "intersubjective realism"[85] objectifies meaning in much the same way as Karl Popper's "third world" (cf. Orr, 1978, 1990). In addition, Scott, as in CCR but not in constructivism according to Orr (1990), views "truth" as existing: "'Truth' as a quiet word, written small, designating an endless quest toward an imperfectly perceived goal, is quite attractive" (Scott, 1972, 158). Rhetoric is not just process, but process creating (truth) — and creations (of truth) exist "in time."

Commitment as epistemic. Contingent commitment ("conviction") can be seen as an integral aspect of all epistemic acts. However, commitment is not necessarily prior to the act of knowing, as if I select a novel position and thereby know its consequences. As Polanyi (1966/1967, xi) has shown, "when originality breeds new values, it breeds them tacitly, by implication; we cannot choose explicitly a set of new values, but must submit to them by the very act of creating or adopting them." This submission serves to modify our very being:

> When we modify our judgments about anything we actually make existential changes in ourselves when we modify our judgments. . . . Thus it is truer to say that we modify our grounds in making new judgments than that we explicitly modify our grounds and then make new judgments through their deliberate and explicit use. The new judgments first appear more meaningful to us than our old ones did, and so we commit ourselves to them . . . (Polanyi & Prosch, 1975, 62)

Further, "If an act of knowing affects our choice between alternative frameworks, or modifies the framework in which we dwell, it involves a change in our way of being" (Polanyi 1969, 134). In striving to know something new, I necessarily shift the tacit grounds with which I know. This shift is deliberate in the sense that I struggle for the new meaning, yet the shift is tacit (submission) and not explicit (choice): I know of the shift and its consequences for me

only ex post facto. I first assent to the new judgment, the new meaning; later I may come to know explicitly the new ground I have used tacitly, who I have become.[86]

Commitments in the act, moreover, serve to "define" who we are for they specify the ways in which things are rendered meaningful to us.

> It is the self to which responsibility, transcendence, subjectivity, and identity have traditionally been ascribed. . . . At the same time, it takes a contradiction to evoke the self. When there is a contradiction, a burden is felt; and the self rises to take up this burden. There is no other occasion on which the self is called for. (Johnstone, 1978, 121)

The self is thus risked in all epistemic acts because we change as our (tacit) commitments change; philosophical arguments are ad hominem in that assessing our knowledge claims means assessing our commitments (Johnstone, 1978). Or as Polanyi (1969, 136) stated it, "there is a co-extension of knowing and being."

As Polanyi (1966/1967, x) said of his Personal knowledge (1958/1962), "my reliance on the necessity of commitment has been reduced by working out the structure of tacit knowing." That is, Polanyi came to his own conceptual shift, from commitment-as-social (i.e., in community) to commitment-as-tacit in all "personal knowledge" (i.e., tacit knowing).[87] We might then say that commitment is epistemic. However, given the problems associated with using "epistemic" a different phrasing might be preferable, for example, committing as knowing. Knowing, doing, committing and being are co-extensive.[88] Perhaps this is why agonistic-transcendent rhetoric is important: when it accomplishes change, our knowing, doing, committing and being change.

Conclusion: on threads and loose ends

In talking about the conceptual maze of rhetorical theory, Leff (1978, 91) says, "Perhaps there is a magic thread, but I doubt that we can find it before we have explored the labyrinth more carefully and learned much more about its conceptual twists and turns." If my

reading of "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" is appropriate, then the field's search for the epistemic thread resulted in a mis-orientation. To regain our bearings and traverse this conceptual labyrinth we will need more than Ariadne's thread. We will need a new myth ("research program") to tell. Scott's approach to rhetoric and not just his "epistemic" work strive to re-orient us. Assessing the adequacy of his approach is a larger project, more reminiscent of an Herculean trial if you will. A more in-depth description of how Scott seeks to revalue our views of rhetoric, the coherence of his work, and what it reveals about rhetoric and Professor Scott as rhetor, too, is a tale for another day if not Muse and poet as well. This saga will be, if you will pardon my expression, "epistemic" in the sense in which I believe Scott meant it to be for rhetoric — a clarity and understanding accompanying cooperative critical inquiring conducted with tolerance, personal will and responsibility.

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Notes

[1] Scott's article received the Charles H. Woolbert Research Award in 1981 (its inaugural year) "for scholarship of exceptional originality and influence" (Scott, 1992).

[2] Concerning his article, Scott (1992) notes "I don't think an analysis of the 1967 article exists. . . . A number of persons have cited it, have commented upon it in some way or other, have used quotations of it positively and negatively, but no one has analyzed it."

[3] Anthropology in the "continental" sense refers "to the philosophical enterprise that concerns itself with the question 'What is man?'" (Berger, 1969/1970, 47).

[4] Hereafter, references to Scott (1967) will be by page number only.

[5] In making this move Scott misrepresents Toulmin to some extent. Scott conflates "analytic" with "certain" and "substantial" with "contingent." However, as Toulmin (1958/1969, 136-41) says, there can be "conclusive" arguments that are substantial and analytic arguments that are inconclusive. As D. Hamlyn's (1967a, 1967b) two encyclopedia articles note, "analytic" is not the opposite of "contingent" in philosophic discussions.

[6] Scott (1968a, 137) advances another argument borrowed from mathematical logic: "Gödel's proof should be a death blow to the notion that, even if there are clear truths apparent to the mind, a complete and consistent system can be built from them." Thus, even if there are truths that are certain, they cannot be used to establish a logical, rational system of beliefs.

[7] Scott (1987) makes no reference to Toulmin even though Toulmin's view of epistemology as the study and assessment of arguments comprises two of the three roles Scott

ascribes to the critic: "to understand the arguments that make up knowledge . . . [and] to judge the arguments," the third role being "to cease to function as a critic and to function in other ways" (59). With these parallels, we can say that the critic, when functioning as such, is also an epistemologist. But it would also suggest a bifurcation of criticism and rhetoric that I doubt Scott would approve.

[8] Scott's interest in "time" is evident in other works as well. For example, at the beginning of his discussion on methodology in communication research he says: "In the sort of science our most productive researchers have emulated, time does not count. Or, more accurately perhaps, time counts only in a very restricted way: as repetition" (1978, 32, emphases in original).

[9] To some extent "contextualism" is a misleading label for a worldview emphasizing the primacy "of interconnected activities with continuously changing patterns" (Pepper, 1942/1970, 233). For the most part, as the reader will note, my references to various "world hypotheses" will be in notes rather than in the main text. This arrangement is for two reasons: (1) my aim is not to label Scott's views, so a discussion of which world hypothesis it best exemplifies is inappropriate, and (2) world hypotheses stand behind theories, so there is an aesthetic appropriateness in their reference being subtext. At the same time, reference to world hypotheses will be frequent to indicate to the reader various choices entailed in Scott's approach to rhetoric as well as ways of thinking about the world of which an agonistic-transcendent rhetoric needs to be aware.

[10] Brummett (1990a, 70) says there has been too much contention over meanings of, for example, "knowledge" and "truth."

[11] In recommending to methodologists of science that they apply the ideas of rhetorical

theory, Weimer (1979, 85) notes that "there is a considerable amount of justificationist conventionalism that must be purged from these works . . . before they can be utilized effectively." The freight, to use Scott's word, is heavy (conceptual) baggage.

[12] Scott (1977b, 261), too, indicates through his usage that "doing" involves "deciding" and "decision."

[13] As Scott (1975, 440) says, "any human activity will involve a skein of tacit assumptions not all of which can be made explicit simultaneously." As such, our activity may not be grounded on choice, for example, choosing a frame of reference, so much as how what is tacit comes to be just that, namely a tacit frame of reference.

[14] Relevant alternatives are no more clearly given in a well-defined context such as chess, as Abrahams' (1951/1960, 30-51) and Kotov's (1971, 44-56) discussions of thinking in chess indicate.

[15] To paraphrase a researcher on expert systems, the human mind but not the computer says, "this reminds me of something."

[16] Contextualism, it should be noted, posits continuous, incessant change with the appearance of permanence "interpreted in terms of historical continuities which are not changeless" (Pepper, 1942/1970, 243). Thus, a contextualist would say that the dissoi logoi only appear to exist, but Scott says that they are elements of a social reality. The crux of the matter would then be how the historical continuities (structures, or social reality) mesh with change, a problem besetting contextualist theories and one that can be viewed as an inherent contradiction within this approach (Pepper, 1942/1970, 278-9).

[17] Weimer (1979, 67) makes similar observations concerning paradigm clashes in science.

[18] Alternatively, we can abandon the notion of action-as-choice and turn to other conceptions, such as Kenneth Burke's (1945/1969) concerning the "act" as a "locus of motives," or even Nicolas Berdyaev's (1962) "creative act."

[19] My frequency counts of "to know" in Scott's article are: introduction — 1, section I — 4, section II — 0; section III — 5, and section IV — 5, for a total count of 15 instances in an article 9 pages long. This infrequent use seems discordant with Scott's "epistemic" focus.

[20] Translation, as Kuhn (1970, 268) has noted, "always involves compromises which alter communication. The translator must decide what alterations are acceptable. To do that he needs to know what aspects of the original it is most important to preserve and also something about the prior education and experience of those who will read his work."

[21] See also Scott's (1977a) discussion of "intrapersonal communication."

[22] Brummett (1990a, 70, emphasis in original) — himself (e.g., 1976, 1990b) an exponent of a process view of rhetoric — strikes a similar pragmatic tone in his asking that rhetorical theorists "operationalize terms and concepts" so theory can be applied to the study of communication. Scott's and Brummett's moves are not surprising. Contextualism often involves operationalism and thus pragmatism (Pepper, 1942/1970, 268-79).

[23] As Scott was to say in a later article (1972, 153, emphasis in original): "Truth, if the word should be used at all, will be only the momentary balancing of forces for particular people at particular times in particular places." In contrast, Scott (1983, 15) steers a

different tack, considering "truth" in three different senses: accuracy, fidelity and agreement. He also mentions but does not discuss truth-as-entailment and truth-as-skill. Truth stemming from the Greek aletheia has even more different implications (Sullivan, 1992).

[24] An individual's assent to a new meaning is important as Polanyi and Prosch (1975) note. Sullivan (1992, 327) makes a similar statement with regard to religious proclamation: "If the [auditor's] response is no, the vision begins to dissipate and is regarded as an apate [deception]. If the response is yes, then a metanoia occurs."

[25] "Doing X" includes both cognitive and social aspects. On the former see, for example, Weimer (1977a); on the former see, for example, Polanyi (1958/1962, 54-55).

[26] This notion is examined below in the context of Scott as social theorist.

[27] Burke (1945/1969, 260) discusses "probability" used as a metaphysic.

[28] In addition to truth-as-certain, intolerance also springs from the-facts-speak-for-themselves (Scott, 1968b, 121).

[29] In another article, however, Scott (1968a, 139) defends his view: "Tolerance should spring not only from a recognition of man's weakness [with respect to the powers of reason] but from a sense of the necessity of the participation of the other in the communication process in order to make maximum the feeble power that each possesses." But this conclusion makes the unwarranted assumption that, in each and every inquiry, any two heads are better than one. As anecdotes from academe will attest, study groups generally improve student learning, but not in every case.

[30] Orr (1990), incidentally, criticizes relativism's tolerance of intolerance in that it makes tolerance and intolerance equals and also treats tolerance as a universal value.

[31] Robert Scott (in another context) "elaborates the ethical demands or requirements for the communicator as '(1) taking responsibility for our choices, recognizing that we must assume the burden of harm done in our attempts to do good; (2) striving for honesty knowing the perils of arrogant self-deception; and (3) demanding toleration for those whose claims contradict our own'" (Golden et al., 1983, 271). It should be noted that "will" has been replaced with an existential quest for self-awareness.

[32] Shirk (1965, 26-27) discusses implications for ethics when a distinction is made between voluntary and involuntary actions.

[33] See Burke (1945/1969, 227-274, passim) on the action-motion pair. Further, if "will" and "freedom" are linked, then "will" is a quality of an act not a predicate of being human.

[34] "Intentionality" substitutes for "will" in Scott's (e.g., 1977a, 1980) later articles.

[35] "[H]istory needs constant revision. In order to understand itself, humankind must recast the past, not because the events of the past change, but because the perspectives of the present change and, with those changes, the demands of the future shift also" (Scott, 1978, 36). Scott here links past, present and future in a manner reminiscent of Augustine's Confessions, especially the saint's discussion of "time" and "memory" (Pusey, 1961, 159-68 and 194-205, respectively). See also Scott's (1987, 59, 61) treatment of "tense." This linearity of time with a moment reflects a contextualist viewpoint (Pepper, 1942/1970, 252-

3).

[36] Concerning the act's role in the manifestation of potentia, see Burke (1945/1969, 252-262).

[37] "The rationalist bias tends to omit the contradictoriness that gives richness to human experience" (Scott, 1968a,136).

[38] Tukey (1989) also claims that the nature of our being human is integrally linked to our conceptualizations and practice of rhetoric.

[39] Contextualism includes the notion of "blocking" that describes unexpected or novel aspects of the situation that do not serve to promote or fulfill the satisfaction of the act (Pepper, 1942/1970, 255-6). Dissoi logoi lead in different directions, thus block an act enacting one as opposed to the other, but for Scott these divergent paths are given by the culture rather than unexpected.

[40] Scott (1977b, 265) suggests that a strict, social determinism of this kind would absolve the individual from any responsibility. But he would likely also say I have misrepresented his position, confusing it with "historical determinism," a position that can be viewed as one interpretation of relativism. He says historicism is wrong, and cites social change as the proof. However, the fact that a process is not static (but dynamic) does not imply it is not deterministic. Moreover, the problem of freedom versus determinism is reflected by an inherent contradiction within contextualism regarding change and structure (see note 15).

[41] For a discussion of these issues within anthropology, see, for example, Goodman (1967).

[42] Cherwitz and Hikins (1986, 137) label Scott's view as "strict subjectivist" and say it is prone to "the problem of solipsism — the inability to account for or find a theoretical place for other minds."

[43] Scott (1972, 150) paraphrases the Biblical verse and gives it a particular slant: "To be isolated, to be in the world but out of the world, is a very special state," that is, to Scott, "not of" means "out."

[44] In general, contextualism is faced with a dilemma: to be content with what is directly verifiable, or posit structures that underlie reality; see Pepper (1942/1970, 268-279) for a discussion. Scott leans toward the former course, and as such his view can be criticized for lacking scope (cf. Pepper, 1942/1970, 279). What Scott fears about structure is that it would entail Immutable Truth as prior to speaking, as would be the case in mechanism or formism; but this objection would not hold for an organismic approach. See Pepper (1942/1970) on differences among these four "world hypotheses" that underlie most conceptualizations.

[45] Scott's position has many themes found in fulfillment models, but there are significant aspects missing from his views: inherent human nature and the facticity of existence.

[46] Theories of personality often have associated with them "ideal types" of human functioning (cf. Maddi, 1976). As such, they provide norms for the development of our personalities, much like Scott provides norms for our rhetorical functioning. Personality types, moreover, reflect value orientations that agonistic-transcendent rhetoric may seek to revalue as well as <u>topoi</u> for rhetoricians.

[47] Leff (1978, 84-5) makes a similar remark: "Although fanatics may often distort objective philosophy, intersubjective relativism also contains the seeds of its own corruption, since it is likely to degenerate into demagoguery."

[48] Scott (1981, 121) calls our attention to the vexing problem of the genesis of totalitarianism. He cites Polanyi and Prosch (1975), saying that "freedom 'rests upon a traditional framework of a certain sort'" (emphases removed).

[49] Orr (1990, 124-25) suggests that critical rationalism can acknowledge multiple selves while also allowing for their coherence within the individual, but that "a purely relativized concept of self cannot account for the agency and integration that flexibility entails."

[50] Orr (1990, 122-26) criticizes relativism by noting that it cannot account for the self's agency and integration.

[51] Becker's (1964/1974, 1967, 1969/1975, 1971, 1973, 1975) interdisciplinary work on the human condition spans the fields of, for example, anthropology, psychology, sociology and theology and should be of interest to rhetoricians.

[52] For a related discussion of Scott's rhetorical theory, see Tukey (1988).

[53] Sullivan (1992), it should be noted, traces kairotic, truth-revealing rhetoric to pre-Platonic, Sophistic frameworks.

[54] Weimer (1977a) notes that Plato's Timaeus portrays humans a co-creators of reality, creative and productive.

[55] In this context we should remember that Bartley's (1962, 1984) comprehensively critical rationalism responds to the tu quoque argument of those who say religion is immune to the criticism that its faith is irrational inasmuch as science makes irrational commitments of its own.

[56] I, too, as rhetor, am under the same set of obligations and responsibilities — according to Scott's view. To the extent a journal author must edit his/her statements as recommended by the journal editor and anonymous reviewers, blame would not be the author's alone of course. If rhetoric is an intersubjective process, then responsibility is shared.

[57] In perhaps his first apologetic statement, Scott (1977b, 259) suggests that "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic" contains an error, though he does not specify its nature.

[58] Although these and previous remarks draw our attention to the "rhetorical situation," for the present argument I will sidestep examining this construct authored by Lloyd F. Bitzer (1968) and hotly debated thereafter.

[59] Polanyi and Prosch (1975) talk about religious understanding in a similar vein: personal knowledge requires tacit commitments. Henriot (1981, xii, emphases in original) expresses this relation: "I have come to believe that commitment is prior to intimacy. One must make an option, take a stand, before everything is clear. Specifically, the knowledge of Jesus in his mission comes primarily from following him in his mission. . . . Commitment to the Lord in his mission is itself a source of becoming intimately acquainted with him as a person."

[60] For an alternate approach that weds knowing to historical, living processes, see

Campbell's (1970, 1975) evolutionary epistemology.

[61] Weimer (1979, 70, 74) has a brief but similar explication of Polanyi's views in the context of scientific methodology.

[62] There is a parallel here to contextualism that speaks about an event's "quality" as being "its intuited wholeness or total character" and its "texture" as "details and relations that make up that character or quality. . . . The two are not separable, though in different events one or the other may be the more prominent. We may now pay more attention to the total meaning, now to the words" (Pepper, 1942/1970, 238). Also, some aspects ("strands") of the event will have a direct influence upon it while others ("context") will have an indirect influence (Pepper, 1942/1970, 246). But there are also parallels to organicism which concerns how "fragments" (particulars) have implicit within them an "organic whole" (integration) (Pepper, 1942/1970, 283).

[63] The present investigation has these same elements, incidentally: analysis, by way of rhetorical criticism, and re-integration, by way of extensions within other frameworks.

[64] Whitson and Poulakos' (1993, 136) aesthetic path as "the act of ordering the chaos of life" can be viewed as a variant of Polanyi's tacit knowing as imaginative. If so, neither "aesthetic" nor "epistemic" are more fundamental than the other. Compare their article to Scott's (1975) synopsis of western rhetoric, especially the contrast between "aesthetic" and "managerial" emphases.

[65] Knowing's "progressive" theme is evident in organicism in as much as contradictions among the fragments are ultimately overcome within a more encompassing integration (see Pepper, 1942/1970, 292-304).

[66] Contextualism would say the new Gestalt is due to a different event, while organicism would say it arises from this new Gestalt's integrating more fragments (cf . Pepper, 1942/1970). Piaget, on the other hand, would describe the new Gestalt as an instance of "accommodation," the knower's previous structures being modified to become more similar to the structures of the known; the counterpart to "accommodation" is "assimilation," the particulars being perceived with respect to the knower's structures which, therefore, do not change (Sahakian , 1984, 368-370).

[67] Cf. Scott (1981) on Polanyi's views as applied to rhetoric.

[68] This observation validates my reviewing Scott's article itself rather than the literature on epistemic rhetoric, incidentally.

[69] Berdyaev (1962, 45) draws a distinction between the kind of "old, childish dogmatism" as illustrated by "the comfortable knowledge and well-being of Thomas Aquinas" and "a new, mature, creative dogmatism . . . which dares, which creates."

[70] See Untersteiner (1954, 146-156), Scott's source on Gorgias. Further, as modern physics has pointed out in, for example, the paradox of Schrödinger's cat, the potentialities of the quantum equation exist up to the point at which consciousness intrudes (Gribbin, 1984, 2-3, 203-13). The parallel to the dissoi logoi is evident.

[71] Although Scott's view posits such dissoi logoi that cannot be fully synthesized or transcended even in the act, it yet can be characterized as a contextualist theory because events may exhibit varying degrees of "fusion" or "qualitative integration" of its details ("textures") (Pepper, 1942/1970, 243-5).

[72] Sullivan (1992) provides another means for connecting knowledge, truth and certainty with respect to kairotic and aletheiac rhetoric, a rhetoric of proclamation and belief that is also "in time." As he also notes, kairos (timing) for Gorgias involves (a) a special time of inspiration, (b) a time when one is faced with a decision of conflicting opinions, and (c) a time when the indecision is resolved by an infusion of being (320).

[73] See Burke (1945/1969, 64-69) on "act as locus of motives."

[74] See Shirk (1965) on voluntary action and freedom.

[75] On doubt and division overcome in a creative act by will and selection, see Berdyaev (1962, 44-46). See also Sullivan (1992) as quoted in note 23.

[76] As another alternative, perhaps "certainty" does not pertain to action at all, but rather the justification and criticism of that action. "Certainty," for example, may be inapplicable within a Taoist theory of action, what Polanyi (1958/1962) said about skill and "tacit knowledge," or even what Toulmin (1958/1969, 240-48) said about "intuition" and savoir faire.

[77] See note 26.

[78] Orr (1978, 1990) refers to this framework as "critical rationalism," but this phrase refers to a position that both Bartley (1962) and Weimer (1979) distinguish from "comprehensively critical rationalism" inasmuch as the former phrase does not specify that every proposition is open to criticism, its own position included. Bartley (1984) uses the phrase "pancritical rationalism." Moreover, Orr (1990) sees Karl Popper and Bartley as

advocating similar views while Weimer (1979) indicates the ways in which they differ.

[79] Instead of "justification" Scott tends to use "transcendental." Thus, he (1983) calls his viewpoint "non-transcendental." Moreover, Scott (1988, 236) explicitly links "transcendence" to "a justification of justification" as well as to "foundationalism."

[80] For example, both Gregg (1984) and Cherwitz and Hikins (1986) include Weimer's work in their bibliographies, but their discussions only explore Weimer's views on the role of rhetoric in science; Weimer's arguments on rationality and nonjustificationalist metatheories are not mentioned. This omission on the part of Cherwitz and Hikins is all the more striking given their definition of knowledge as justified-true-belief and discussion of "justification."

[81] Compare Bartley's view to this statement by Scott (1968a, 137): "The degree to which an attempt to build a rational case against rationalism is successful, to that degree the case refutes itself. In short, a man encounters paradox when his reason tells him to mistrust reason."

[82] In arguing against "transcendentalism" qua possessing a bedrock of Certainty, Scott (1983) calls himself a "non-transcendentalist." Given CCR's terminology, we might say he is leaning toward nonjustificationalism. Perhaps Scott can tell us whether such a relabeling is apt or whether there are significant differences between these viewpoints.

[83] Even "freedom" can be reconceptualized as being in the moment: "[F]reedom is a way of acting rather than a state of being[,] . . . a quality of action and vision which is revitalized in each situation" (Shirk, 1965, 355).

[84] Scott explicitly espouses existentialism (e.g., 1964) and defends relativism (e.g.,

1977b, 1989b). Yet in one article (Scott, 1972, 153) he distances himself from relativism, an anything goes position he says tends toward elitism.

[85] There are two pertinent references. (a) Scott (1972): "meaning is in the world — indiscriminately. The intersubjective realist finds such a prospect illusion" (148). Scott argues against the notion that "words do not mean, only people mean," saying that meanings exist, for example, "While a language exists, traditional meanings exist" (154). (b) Scott (1973) discusses "intersubjective reality" as a "set toward reality" with consequences for how we understand rhetoric: "The intersubjective realist . . . may sense rhetoric as simultaneously in the world and of his experience" (92). Concerning the existence of meaning, Scott (1980, 56) says, "Thus the analysis in this paper accepts the force of the modern maxim 'meanings are in people' but suggests that meanings are also in words. Meanings residing in the terms of past arguments can be possessed and therefore transformed in the moment to bind and free the future."

[86] Here again we find Burke's and Berdyaev's notions of creativity as due to the nature of the act, as well as Toulmin's task for epistemology of rendering explicit and then assessing our claims to know.

[87] It is especially telling that Scott (1981) fails to notice that Polanyi has shifted aspects of his philosophy from community, with emphases on, for example, authority and conviviality (1958/1962), to tacit knowing, with emphases on psychological processes, for example, skill acquisition and imagination (1966/1967).

[88] As Pepper (1942/1970, 232-3) notes, contextualism focuses upon the "dynamic dramatic active event" and thus verbs are preferable.